

cigar aficionado

THE GOOD LIFE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

www.cigaraficionado.com

**FANTASY
SPORTS
BETTING**

**CUBA
EYES
THE U.S.
MARKET**

THE TOP
25
CIGARS
OF 2015

**PLUS 32 CIGARS
UNDER \$6**

**DAMIAN
LEWIS**
ONE IN A
BILLION

**CONGRESSMAN
PETER KING:
RISKS
FACING
AMERICA**

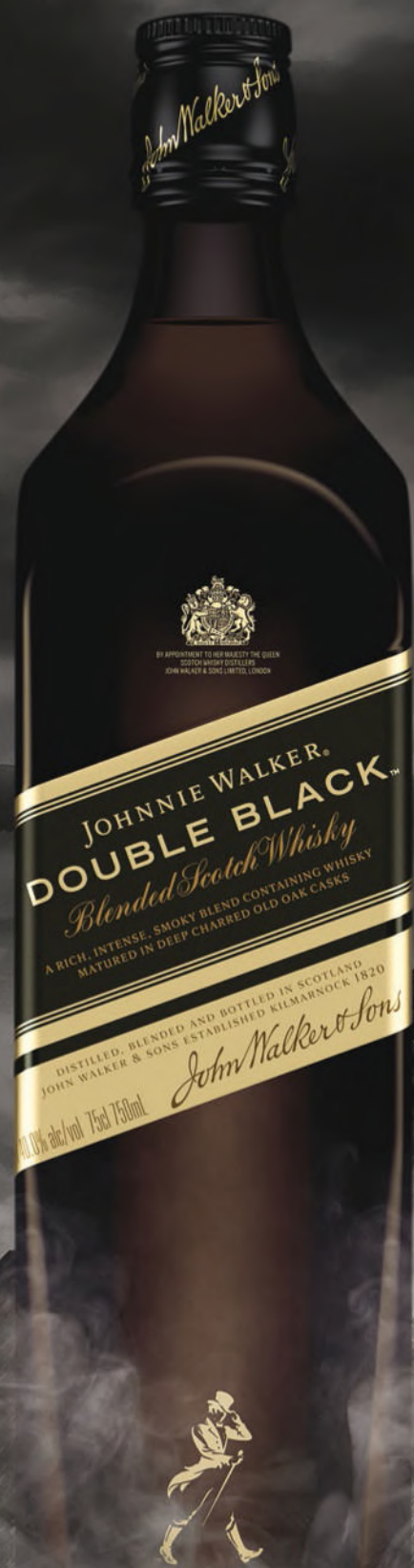
**104
CIGARS
RATED**





John Walker & Sons

THE INTENSE BLEND



PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

JOHNNIE WALKER DOUBLE BLACK Blended Scotch Whisky. 40% Alc/Vol. ©2015 Imported by Diageo, Norwalk, CT.

“AN INTENSE AND RICH PREMIUM BLEND WITH A SMOULDERING SPICINESS AND POWERFUL PEAT SMOKE FINISH. BOLD FLAVOR AND CLASSIC CHARACTER – THIS IS JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL REINTERPRETED WITH A NEW LEVEL OF INTENSITY”

Jim Beveridge

JOHNNIE WALKER MASTER BLENDER

The very creation of Johnnie Walker Double Black is proof that the pioneering spirit of our founder, John Walker, is still very much alive. Our blenders are always stepping boldly into the unknown, pushing boundaries and seeking new expressions while protecting the traditions passed down across generations. And at this very moment they have over 150 different live experiments underway.

When they sought to craft Johnnie Walker Double Black, they wanted to heighten the smoky flavors of the world's most popular 12 year old blend – Johnnie Walker Black Label. It was with great care that they selected mature, naturally smoky whiskies including Caol Ila® Single Malt from the misty isle of Islay, blending their flavors in deep-charred oak casks.

Johnnie Walker Double Black proves you don't stay ahead by standing still. This exciting blend is full-bodied and complex yet supremely smooth, with peat smoke swirling through hints of rich raisins, apples, pears, vanilla and oranges. With a warming and powerful spicy oak finish it is true testimony to the skill of our blenders who have invented a critically-acclaimed blend to take the flavors of Johnnie Walker into the 21st century.





John Walker & Sons

THE INTENSE BLEND



PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

JOHNNIE WALKER DOUBLE BLACK Blended Scotch Whisky. 40% Alc/Vol. ©2015 Imported by Diageo, Norwalk, CT.

THE INTENSITY OF ISLAY

Crafted with a higher proportion of Islay malts and matured in deep-charred oak casks, Johnnie Walker® Double Black™ is Johnnie Walker® Black Label® with extra layers of smokiness.



JOHNNIE WALKER®

KEEP WALKING®

JOHNNIEWALKER.COM

NEW DAVIDOFF ESCURIO

A NIGHT IN RIO INSPIRES AN ADVENTURE IN TASTE •
OUR MASTER BLENDER REFINED THE FIRE OF THE CUBAN CRIOLLO LEAVES, THEN INTRODUCED
IT TO THE BRAZILIAN MATA FINA LEAF WHICH PULSES AT THE HEART OF THIS ORIGINAL BLEND •
DOMINICAN TOBACCOS AND A HABANO SEED ECUADORIAN WRAPPER ADD BEAUTIFUL BALANCE •
SWEET MEETS SPICE • LIKE RIO AFTER DARK, IT'S A JOURNEY OF TWISTS AND TURNS •

RHYTHM • INTRIGUE • ORIGINALITY
DISCOVER WHERE ESCURIO MIGHT TAKE YOU



@Davidoff_Cigars



DavidoffCigars1911

davidoff.com



Davidoff
CIGARS

TIME BEAUTIFULLY FILLED

THREE TIME ZONES AT A GLANCE



PATRAVI TRAVELTEC FOURX

Selected rose gold, precious titanium, extra-hard high-tech ceramic and tough natural rubber give time a new material form. Globetrotters will find that the Patravi TravelTec FourX brings them the perfect combination of luxury and high-tech. It displays three time zones at once and jumps across time zones at the touch of a button. With Carl F. Bucherer's engineering on a miniature scale, your journey through time can begin.

BOUND TO TRADITION – DRIVEN BY INNOVATION



CARL F. BUCHERER
FINE SWISS WATCHMAKING

WWW.CARL-F-BUCHERER.COM
800.395.4306

contents

january/february 2016

up front

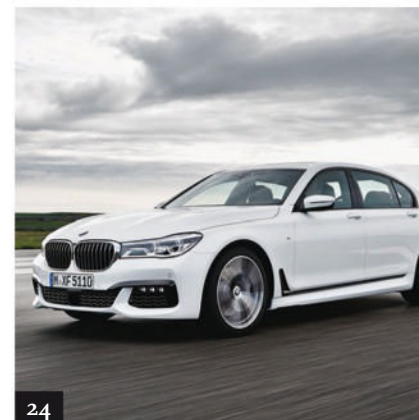
- 8 CIGAR HIGHLIGHTS
- 13 EDITORS' NOTE
- letters 15 OUT OF THE HUMIDOR
- the best 21 THE GOOD LIFE GUIDE
- 22 PLACES The majesty of Nicaragua Mukul.
- 24 WHEELS BMW 7 Series shows its smart side.
- 27 CIGARS Putting cigar jars to good use.
- 29 ELECTRONICS Steinway classes up player pianos.
- 32 COLLECTING The joy of rare books.
- 35 GOURMET Meat grinding isn't a grind.
- 38 SPORT Tying your own fishing flies.
- 41 STYLE Estate jackets: not just for gentry.
- 42 TIME Breitling Emergency II to the rescue.
- 45 DRINK Beer coolers for your Super Bowl party.

features

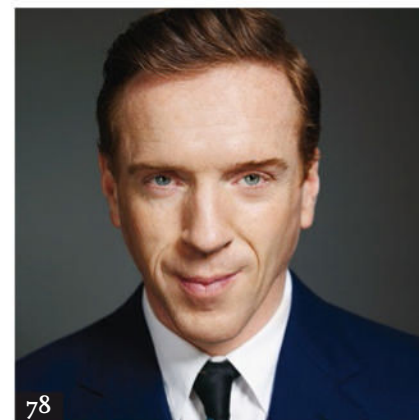
- cigars 48 TOP 25
It was hard work, but we enjoyed every puff while picking CIGAR AFICIONADO's Top 25 Cigars of the Year from the more than 700 cigars tasted last year. The winner is...
- cover 78 DAMIAN LEWIS'S "BILLIONS"
The star of "Homeland" returns to television as a hedge-fund rogue with a common touch, bringing his knack for playing complex characters with a sympathetic side.



48



24



78

ON THE COVER

Damian Lewis returns to Showtime in "Billions." photograph by David Yellen



FULL-FLAVORED ULTRA SMOOTH EXTRA-SATISFACTION

Made with only Jalapa Ligeros
from Nicaragua's northern most
tobacco region, the Cain Daytona
delivers a solid, but smooth,
medium-bodied taste.

Cain
DAYTONA 

world 94 **GLOBAL THREATS HIT HOME**
In the wake of a series of barbaric acts of terrorism—both at home and abroad—Congressman Peter King, with his deep background in security and counterintelligence, assesses the risks.

golf 104 **THE NEW PATH TO THE PGA TOUR**
Highly competitive and professional, the Web.Com Tour is supplanting the PGA qualifying school as the road to the big time. And the explosion of talent has established stars wondering, “Who are these guys?”

gambling 112 **BETTING ON FANTASY**
The daily fantasy sports industry says that theirs is a game of skill, but many claim that it seems a lot like gambling. Will this new gaming sensation go the way of Internet poker?

cigars

tasting 126 We rate 79 cigars in six sizes: Churchills (126), corona gordas (128), figurados (130), miscellaneous (132), petit coronas (134) and robustos (136) plus Connoisseur’s Corner, our vintage cigar tasting (140).

interview 143 **ALAN RUBIN OF ALEC BRADLEY**
For cigarmakers, being chosen No. 1 Cigar of the Year is a dream come true, but our interview with Alan Rubin reveals that it can come with headaches.

cuba report 150 **LIFE AFTER EMBARGO?**
Cuba’s tobacco monopoly is taking a long-range view at the possibility of an opened U.S. market. The plans include increased plantings, the training of new rollers and additional factories.

152 **MOMENTS TO REMEMBER**
Photos from our readers as they enjoy themselves and their cigars.

160 **MADE FOR YOU**
Serious shirting; a street-legal tank; cigar-punch cuff links; Riedel’s Champagne glass; cigar box guitars; and the ultimate James Bond dossier.



104



94



112

highlights

High scores abounded in this issue. Our highest review, 94 points, was given to a cigar of great pedigree, the Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2. Perhaps the most revered of Cuban robustos by cigar smokers in the know, these short Hoyos keep putting up good scores. A pair of newer cigars—from established cigarmakers—scored 93 points. The Ashton Symmetry Prestige, which has only been on sale since late 2014, continued its run of high ratings with this 93 point score. The cigar is made by the Fuentes in the Dominican Republic. Our best toro, or corona gorda, comes from the Garcia family of Nicaragua. Their new El Centurion H-2K-CT Toro Box Pressed is blended with a Havana-seed leaf from the Connecticut River Valley. Note the presence of a newcomer to these pages. Making an impressive first appearance is the Tierra Volcán from Nicaragua, which scored 92 points for best in our miscellaneous category.



TOP ROBUSTO

HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 2

CUBA

94

One of Cuba's most beloved cigars, the Hoyo Epi 2 is a consistent top performer. Over the past five years, the cigar has scored repeatedly in the 90s in CIGAR AFICIONADO reviews.



TOP CHURCHILL

ASHTON SYMMETRY PRESTIGE

DOM. REP.

93

The first blend from Ashton made with Nicaraguan tobacco—and the first new Ashton in about a decade—stands atop our ranking of best Churchills.



TOP CORONA GORDA

EL CENTURION H-2K-CT TORO BOX PRESSED

NICARAGUA

93

Made with a seed variety grown in the open sunlight in the glacial, American soils of Connecticut, this new El Centurion has only been on sale for a few months, but its debut tasting was extraordinary.



TOP FIGURADO

ROMEO Y JULIETA PIRÁMIDES AÑEJADOS

CUBA

92

One of Cuba's nascent Añejado series of cigars, a pair of aged smokes that hit the market about a year ago, performed superbly in its first CIGAR AFICIONADO taste test.



TOP MISCELLANEOUS

TIERRA VOLCÁN CORTO

NICARAGUA

92

A well-made mini robusto with a great colorado complexion. Notes of honeyed wood and mocha segue into an earthy finish with elements of cinnamon and cappuccino.



TOP PETIT CORONA

DAVIDOFF WINSTON CHURCHILL PETIT CORONA

DOM. REP.

92

The new, rebled and reimagined version of the Winston Churchill brand tied with Cuba's Punch Petit Coronation (Tubo) for best in our smallest cigar category.



HOUSE OF MARNIER LAPOSTOLLE
MAISON FONDÉE EN 1827
PARIS FRANCE

*The new standard for
luxury, style and taste
from Grand Marnier.®*



CUVÉE DU CENTENAIRE

First introduced in 1927 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of our Maison's founding; we now proudly unveil a new presentation of our classic packaging.

CUVÉE 1880®

Our newest expression, Cuvée 1880 celebrates and pays homage to the year that Grand Marnier Cordon Rouge was created by our founder, Louis-Alexandre Marnier Lapostolle.

QUINTESSENCE

Our limited annual release is a premier blend of rare Grande Fine Champagne XO Cognacs with our famous essence of orange parfum.

Rocky  Patel

1995-2015

TWENTIETH

ANNIVERSARY



The Era of Elegance Continues



Celebrating 20 years

—

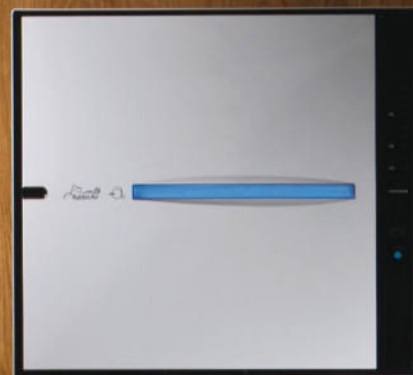
In the business of creating iconic cigars, we couldn't deliver something short of magnificent. The Twentieth Anniversary follows the lineage of the Rocky Patel Decade & Fifteenth Anniversary cigars.

TWEET, FOLLOW OR VISIT AT:



WWW.ROCKYPATEL.COM





Clean Air Defined

"Rabbit Air's purifiers are the best products we have ever had at the club."



- Mauricio Córdoba,
General Manager of Club Macanudo NYC



Effective . Quiet . Stylish . Air Purifiers

For a free catalog call

888.866.8862

www.rabbitair.com/smoke



Thoughts for the Year Ahead

As we write this editors' note 2015 is coming to an end. It has been a stellar year for CIGAR AFICIONADO, with some of the most impressive subjects ever to grace our covers: Liam Neeson, Hugh Jackman, Vince Vaughn, Jon Voight and the incomparable Robert De Niro. At the same time, Cuba, the birthplace of the cigar world, is in the midst of great change. The reality of open visitation for all of our readers—not just a few—is closer than ever. In November we held our 20th annual Big Smoke in Las Vegas, attended by more than 4,000 people from around the United States and the globe. And we have chosen a superb Cigar of the Year, which you can read about on page 48.

Yet there is trouble in the air. On November 13, a group of terrorists from the organization ISIS launched a series of coordinated attacks on innocent civilians in the streets of Paris, killing 130. In December, a husband and wife opened fire with assault rifles in San Bernardino, California, transforming a holiday party into a bloodbath. While it was unclear at the time of our writing whether the shooters were members of a terrorist group, the FBI had declared the attack an act of terrorism, and evidence suggested that the shooters had at least been inspired by, if not directed by, terrorist organizations.

Sadly, these attacks are not isolated, nor are they stopping. Each incident serves as a harsh reminder of the increasingly dangerous world in which we live.

For expert analysis of this serious subject we turned to Rep. Peter King of New York's second congressional district. Rep. King is a 12-term

veteran of the U.S. House of Representatives with a long and impressive résumé. He is a former chairman and a current member of the Homeland Security Committee. We asked Rep. King to share his insight and opinion on the threats facing the United States in a special report, which appears on page 94. It's an important read, one that looks at the actions of ISIS and other organizations and the threats they face to the United States of America.

These are difficult times, and it's important that we stand tall in the face of such dangers. We must be bold and confront those who wish us—and our loved ones—harm. We can't back down from these threats and we certainly can't ignore them. Wishing them away won't keep us safe.

That said, we must not forget our core values, and cannot surrender to fear. We have persevered as a people by holding strong to our dignity and our beliefs. We cannot allow the actions of a barbaric few to change who we are. It's important that our leaders keep us safe, and it's also important that our leaders preserve our humanity.

We wish all of you a happy, healthy and safe new year.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

DAVID SAVONA
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

INTRODUCING

La Bohème

ENCANTADOR

BOX PRESSED

Blending is in our DNA™



From the makers of
Aging Room

No.2 Cigar of 2013

www.BoutiqueBlends.com

out of the humidor

Dear Marvin,

Your Editors' Note came during a very, very important time. We do live in a media-crazed era where ratings and drama thrive. I struggle with finding my own outlets and often find myself turning to international sources. I see this struggle through my peers. While some hold their sources on a pedestal, others denounce anything that contests their standard. Jim Morrison said, "Whoever controls the media, controls the mind." So far that quote has rung more true than not.

Alas, I do have faith. I hear questions being asked and I see status quos being confronted. In this roaring storm of political unrest, media agendas, and unfiltered reporting your note and Jeff Greenfield's article ["Can You Trust the Media?" December] are the calm of the seas. Thank you.

Matthew Dwyer Hingst
Denver, Colorado

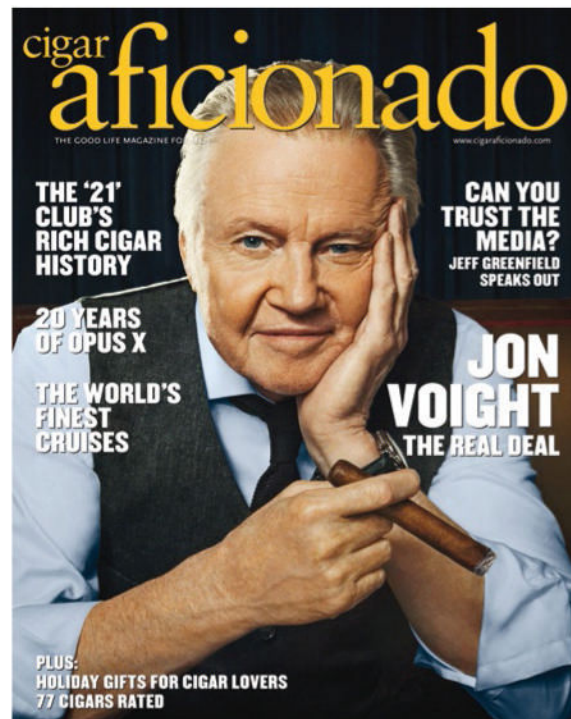
Dear Marvin,

Your article on the '21' Club ["The '21' Club's Havana Gamble," December] brought back the memory of a great lunch there years ago. A year or so after our wedding, my wife and I were in New York City and invited our best man, a New Yorker, to lunch at '21.' We asked our waiter if he could take a photo of us and were informed photos were not allowed in the restaurant. A gentleman at the next table turned to us and said, "I made the rule, I can break it." We handed him our camera and he took a picture of us. I now see from your article and his photo that it was Mr. Tannen. Upon learning that we were from out of town, we were invited by the wine steward and taken on a tour of the kitchens and the wine cellar, seeing the brick "door," the wire "key," wine bins for celebrity patrons and an endless collection of vintage wines.

Keith Heldenbrand
Freeport, Maine

Dear Marvin,

My wife and I just returned from our first trip to Cuba. We bought several guidebooks and consulted dozens of Internet articles but without fail, it was your special "Welcome to Cuba" issue [June] that never steered us wrong. From an amazing romantic dinner at La Guarida



"Your Editors' Note came during a very, very important time. We do live in a media-crazed era where ratings and drama thrive. I struggle with finding my own outlets . . ."
—*Matthew Dwyer Hingst, Denver, Colorado*

to buying cigars at Club Habana along a perfect stretch of beach in Miramar, your magazine's suggestions were always perfect. In a country with limited access to the Internet, even your one-page map became my Rosetta stone for navigating the confusing streets of Havana's old town. We were also lucky enough to take a trip west into the epic and lush valley around Viñales to see where the best tobacco leaves in the world are born. I spent time touring the Torres family farm where the next generation of crops are in the skilled hands of Michael Torres. He showed us the process from tending the plants in the burnt orange clay to curing leaves in thatch-covered barns. Finally, he turned what seemed like a pile of aged leather strips into a rich, smooth corona in seconds. It's a trip we'll never forget.

Stephen and Cali Saylor
Miami Beach, Florida

CONTACT US **TWITTER** @cigaraficmag • **FACEBOOK** facebook.com/CigarAficionado • **INSTAGRAM** @cigaraficmag
E-MAIL letters@cigaraficionado.com • **LETTERS** 825 8th Ave., 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019 • **EDITORS' BLOGS** Find out what the editors of CIGAR AFICIONADO are thinking—and smoking—in our editors' blogs. David Savona, Gordon Mott, Jack Bettridge, Gregory Mottola and Andrew Nagy want to hear from you. The conversation is taking place on cigaraficionado.com.

cigar aficionado

Printed in the U.S.A.

A publication of M. Shanken Communications, Inc.
Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10019
212/684-4224 fax: 212/684-5424 e-mail: letters@cigaraficionado.com

VOL. 24 NO. 2

Editor & Publisher

MARVIN R. SHANKEN

Executive Editor	DAVID SAVONA
Senior Features Editor	JACK BETTRIDGE
Art Director	JOHN THOMPSON
Senior Editor	GREGORY MOTTOLA
Associate Editor	ANDREW NAGY
Tasting Coordinator/Editorial Assistant	DAVID CLOUGH
Editorial Assistant	BLAKE DROESCH
Senior Contributing Editor	GORDON MOTT
Contributing Editors	PAUL A. EISENSTEIN, MARSHALL FINE, MICHAEL KAPLAN, LARRY OLMSTED, JEFF WILLIAMS
Photo Editor	CASEY OTO
Production Manager	KEVIN MULLIGAN
Associate Art Director	TODD MILLER
Associate Art Director	LISA AURIGEMMA
Designer	HENRY ENG
Designer	DIANA WITKOWSKI
Promotions Designer	ALEXANDER ODELL
Assistant Photo Editor	KARISSA MAGGIO
Manager, Cigar Aficionado Online	ANDREW NAGY
Customer Service Rep., Cigar Aficionado Online	TINA RATWANI
Production Associate, New Media	EDISON A. LEON
Director of Digital Media	JAMES LAPORTE
Online Coordinator	TARA SCUDDER
Site Developers	ANURADHA UDYAVER
Senior Vice President, Ad Sales and Services	CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY
Vice President/Associate Publisher	BARRY ABRAMS
Corporate Advertising	MIRIAM MORGENSTERN
Director, Beverage/Alcohol Advertising	MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK
Senior Account Manager	ERIN WALKER
Senior Account Directors, West Coast	LINDSEY B. RONALD, CHERYL LEWIS
Southeast Advertising Sales	WHEELER MORRISON, GREEN LEAVES MEDIA
Midwest Advertising Sales	SUSAN TAUSTER
Detroit Advertising Sales	CHRISTINE ANDERSON
Arizona Golf Advertising Sales	STEVE BLIMAN
Canadian Advertising Sales	APR, WAYNE ST. JOHN
Advertising Events Manager	LIZ MOTT
Advertising/Special Projects Graphic Designer	CHRYSTIE MARINO
Sales Assistants	HILARY CHALSON, MAGGIE KOTRABA, KATIE COMBS
Vice President, Custom Media	DON GATTERDAM
Advertising Services Manager	CHRISTINA CHIAFFITELLA
Director of Technology	MICHAEL TURRO
Lead Developer	RICHARD OWENS
Imaging	NINA DODERO, SAMANTHA SAFFER
Prepress	DAVE BOULANGER, ERIC CHEUNG
Senior Vice President, Events Marketing	LYNN RITTENBAND
Events Marketing Manager	SUSANNAH NOLAN
Events Marketing Coordinator	LISA GRIBBIN
Events Marketing Assistant	SHAUNTAY DUNBAR
Senior Vice President, Circulation	LAURA ZANDI
Circulation Director	PHYLICIA BEDOYA
Circulation Manager	JESSE ARVIDSON
Senior Retail Sales Director	JEANNE HOLLY
Retail Account Manager	SHIREN FELICIEN
Chairman	MARVIN R. SHANKEN
Vice Chairman	MICHAEL D. MOABA
President/COO	MEL MANNION
Senior Vice President	CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY
Senior Vice President	LYNN RITTENBAND
Senior Vice President	LAURA ZANDI
Vice President, Business Development	JESSICA SHANKEN
Assistant to the Publisher	JANICE MCMANUS-GENEVRIÑO

Questions about your subscription? Call 800/365-4929

Questions about your retail sales account? Call 800/344-0763

Dear Marvin,

After being a longtime subscriber from “across the pond” it was a great moment when my best pal and I caught up with you at the Old Course at St Andrews during the recent Dunhill Links Challenge. It was so good of you to take time out to chat and pose for photos.

My signed copy of CIGAR AFICIONADO will always be treasured. I hope you enjoyed your trip to the Home of Golf and home to two great fans of the magazine.

Keith A. Shearer and Stuart M. Carnegie

Dollar, Scotland

Dear Marvin,

I loved the story on Richard Overton [“A Cigar Smoking Life,” June]. Is there any chance that there may be a cigar on the horizon named in Richard Overton’s “the nation’s most senior cigar smoker” honor? This would be a hell of a story for you to cover and break.

I am already clearing my artifact shelf for the cigar label brandishing his name.

Looking forward to some progressive news.

Al Busybros Long

San Pablo, California

Editors’ Response: Count us as members of the Richard Overton fan club. He’s 109 years old, a veteran of the Second World War, has a great sense of humor, smokes cigars regularly and enjoys the occasional dram of whiskey. We know of no cigar in his name, but we’ll raise a toast to this great man. Cheers to Mr. Overton.

Dear Marvin,

While enjoying your latest magazine I was especially interested in the discussion concerning the cigar lounges on cruise ships [“The World’s Best Cruises,” December]. While in New York City this summer I discovered the rooftop cigar lounges at the Knickerbocker Hotel, the Peninsula Hotel and the Carnegie Club, as well as the cigar lounge at the Wellesley Hotel in London.

Your magazine used to have a running list of cigar-friendly venues all over the world. I really miss that and feel there are many world travelers who would appreciate the heads up.

Jim Baughn

Lincoln, California

Editors’ Response: As the saying goes nowadays, “There’s an app for that.” To help our readers find cigar-friendly venues around the United States we recently introduced Where To Smoke, available in the iOS and Google Play stores for use on your phones, tablets and other mobile devices, and on our website www.cigaraficionado.com for use on your desktop. All are free of charge. It has more than 2,200 places around the United States that welcome your cigar. Future versions for international locations are planned. ❖

THE TOUR THAT BECAME LEGEND
THE DRINK
THAT FUELED IT



Originally reserved for members of the Cuervo family, Reserva de la Familia® is an Extra Añejo tequila aged in French and American oak made from the Estate's finest hand-selected agaves.

ReservaDeLaFamilia.com/RollingStones

TABACALERA USA: 400 YEARS OF HISTORY

Our story is the story of cigars. It starts in 1492 when explorers crossed the Atlantic and discovered tobacco in America. But it wasn't until 1636 that the future Tabacalera Company came into being in Spain. From these deep roots, Tabacalera USA unites the essence of history, farming, manufacturing and marketing excellence - reflecting the very best of tradition and expertise.

1636

The embryo of Tabacalera –the oldest tobacco company in the world- is created

1758

The Royal Tobacco Factory of Sevilla opens

1887

Compañía Arrendataria de Tabacos, previous name of Tabacalera is founded

1945

Tabacalera S.A. is formed

2000

Tabacalera S.A. and Seita merger creates Altadis

2013

Imperial Tobacco Group, after Altadis' acquisition in 2008, restores the name Tabacalera for its Premium Cigar Division

2015

Tabacalera USA is created



TIME MADE US GRAND

Quality tobacco growers
in the United States



Largest handmade cigar
factory in the world

Honduras' largest
premium cigar factory



The World's largest
cigar store

Leading premium cigar
manufacturer in
the United States



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Tobacco
Smoke Increases The Risk Of Lung Cancer
And Heart Disease, Even In Nonsmokers.



THE NAT SHERMAN 85TH ANNIVERSARY CIGAR

— LIMITED EDITION —

"Without the support, love and commitment of our devoted staff and faithful customers, we would not be celebrating such an incredible milestone."

— Joel Sherman



NATSHERMAN.COM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 800-221-1690

WARNING: Smoking cigars regularly poses risks of cancer of the mouth, throat, larynx, and esophagus similar to smoking cigarettes.



JOEL SHERMAN 75th CELEBRATION LIMITED EDITION CIGAR

#1 Cigar 2014 - *Cigar Coop* Top 10 Award 2014 - *Halfwheel*
#1 Luxury Cigar 2014 - *Cigar Dojo*

good life guide

Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.

places	22	MUKUL RESORT, NICARAGUA
wheels	24	BMW 7-SERIES
cigars	27	CIGAR JAR HUMIDORS
electronics	29	STEINWAY SPIRIO PLAYER PIANO
collecting	32	BAUMAN RARE BOOKS
gourmet	35	MEAT GRINDERS
sport	38	TIE YOUR OWN FLIES
style	41	PAUL STUART ESTATE JACKET
time	42	BREITLING EMERGENCY II
drink	45	THE BEER COOLER





Mukul Resort, Guacalito de la Isla, Nicaragua

Undulating forested topography dramatically meets the sea where sandstone cliffs rise above the water to define a cove that protects Manzanillo Beach at Mukul. The resort serves up a beautifully balanced experience, blending environmental sustainability, social responsibility and native culture and people, amid the exotic splendor of tropical flora and fauna to create an allure that facilitates a rapid discarding of woes.

And if that weren't enough to recommend Mukul, my personal cigar wish list was waiting on arrival through a preorder service with food and beverage director Raul Zeledon.

This luxury boutique hotel, set in Nicaragua's Guacalito de la Isla on the country's Emerald Coast, has a lot to offer. The development, with its four miles of beach strands on the Pacific Ocean side of the country, is a secluded 1,670-acre private property that encompasses a residential enclave and Mukul, an enchanting luxury beach, golf and spa hideaway.

The form-follows-function, artistic design of interiors and exteriors maximizes sensory contact while immersing guests in both nature and authentic traditions of Nicaragua. The 35 spacious oceanfront beach and hillside villas and tree house-like *bohios* are custom creations that combine luxury with immersion in the environment (\$725 to \$1,825 a night for single bedrooms in high season). The magnificent owner's residences are also sometimes available (\$5,375 to \$6,925).

Enjoy a cigar and glass of 18- or 25-year-old rum under the expansive, oval *palapa*. The intriguing structure provides shade, captures cooling breezes and houses the Flor de Caña (rum) room and a walk-in humidor stocked with Padrón, Plasencia, Oliva, Joya de Nicaragua, New World by AJ Fernandez, Nicaraguan Global Premium, and even the Cuban Cohiba Behike BHK 52.

David McLay Kidd's golf design incorporates an 18th green on Manzanillo Beach. Its challenging but enjoyable layout meanders over rolling terrain and through coastal woodlands to the sea. The course was built under strict guidelines to minimize ecological impact. Non-golfers also have many opportunities to explore the captivating environment.

A personal therapist greets you at one of Spa Mukul's six private, luxurious suites. Each is differently themed and offers customized treatments and healing traditions, personal steam and changing rooms, and outdoor relaxation areas.

Guacalito de la Isla is the passion of Don Carlos Pellas, founder and chief executive officer of Grupo Pellas, which includes Flor de Caña. His ambitious vision is to change the image of an entire country, and to "let the world know that Nicaragua is a peaceful, safe, beautiful, undiscovered country, and an ideal tourist destination."

Visit mukulresort.com

—Bill Nestor



LIGA PRIVADA NO.9 WORTH IT, EVERY TIME.

*There is a level of sophistication
and strength that is worth the wait,
worth your hard earned dollar.*

*We work hard to make sure
your Liga Privada is every bit
the most pleasurable smoking
experience, every time.*

- Jonathan Drew



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Cigars Are Not A Safe Alternative To Cigarettes.



THE REBIRTH OF CIGARS / WWW.DREWSTATE.COM



BMW 7-Series

BMW has long billed itself the maker of “the ultimate driving machine.” Models like the new M3 performance sedan certainly live up to that expectation. But what to do in an era when autonomous cars are migrating from science fiction to everyday reality? Could the Bavarian maker eventually build the “ultimate self-driving machine”?

While the completely redesigned 2016 BMW 7-Series won't let you take your hands off the wheel and pick up your iPad or *Wall Street Journal*, it does come tantalizingly close. This year's iteration is as much a tech junkie's dream machine as a car for those who consider performance the ultimate high. In developing the 2016 7-Series, BMW engineers intentionally set out to one-up the Mercedes-Benz S-Class, until now the high-tech automotive benchmark. And, at least in terms of the number and range of new features the 7-Series offers, it would seem they've succeeded.

Visually, the new 7-Series hasn't undergone many changes. From the twin-kidney grille to the high-deck trunk, you might confuse the 2016 model for the big sedan it replaces. But slip behind the wheel and you'll quickly notice the differences, signaled by the new 12.3-inch reconfigurable gauge cluster and the huge LCD screen atop the center stack.

Trying to run through all the new features on this sixth-generation 7-Series (starting at \$81,300) is near impossible. Grille shutters automatically open and close to improve fuel economy. All-wheel steering improves handling at high speeds and parking at low speeds. Stereo cameras hidden behind the rearview mirror predict potholes and bumps to adjust the suspension. And the big Beemer will even access navigation

data to automatically adjust its steering boost and transmission shifts.

You can take your hands off the wheel on a well-marked roadway for up to 15 seconds—and it would be even longer if not for regulatory restrictions. The new 7-Series not only offers forward collision warning with autobraking—and pedestrian detection—but will even begin to steer itself around an obstacle if necessary.

There is, of course, the requisite audiophile system, in this case a 1,400-watt, 16-speaker package from Bowers & Wilkens. You can adjust volume, as well as take or reject incoming phone calls with the auto industry's first-ever gesture control system. It allows you to program one gesture of your own using two fingers—not the one finger salute you might be tempted to use if all this gets the better of you. The good news is that BMW will now schedule an appointment with 7-Series buyers a couple weeks after they take delivery to meet and explain features they're not likely to have yet even discovered.

For traditional BMW fans who might feel a bit deflated by all the emphasis on technology, the good news is that the 750i's 4.4-liter V-8 makes a solid 445 horsepower with plenty of low-end grunt. And despite its size, the sedan is delightfully nimble when you take full manual control. The 2016 remake successfully blends both traditional and new elements of luxury while maintaining the performance and handling characteristics behind the BMW brand's familiar catchphrase.

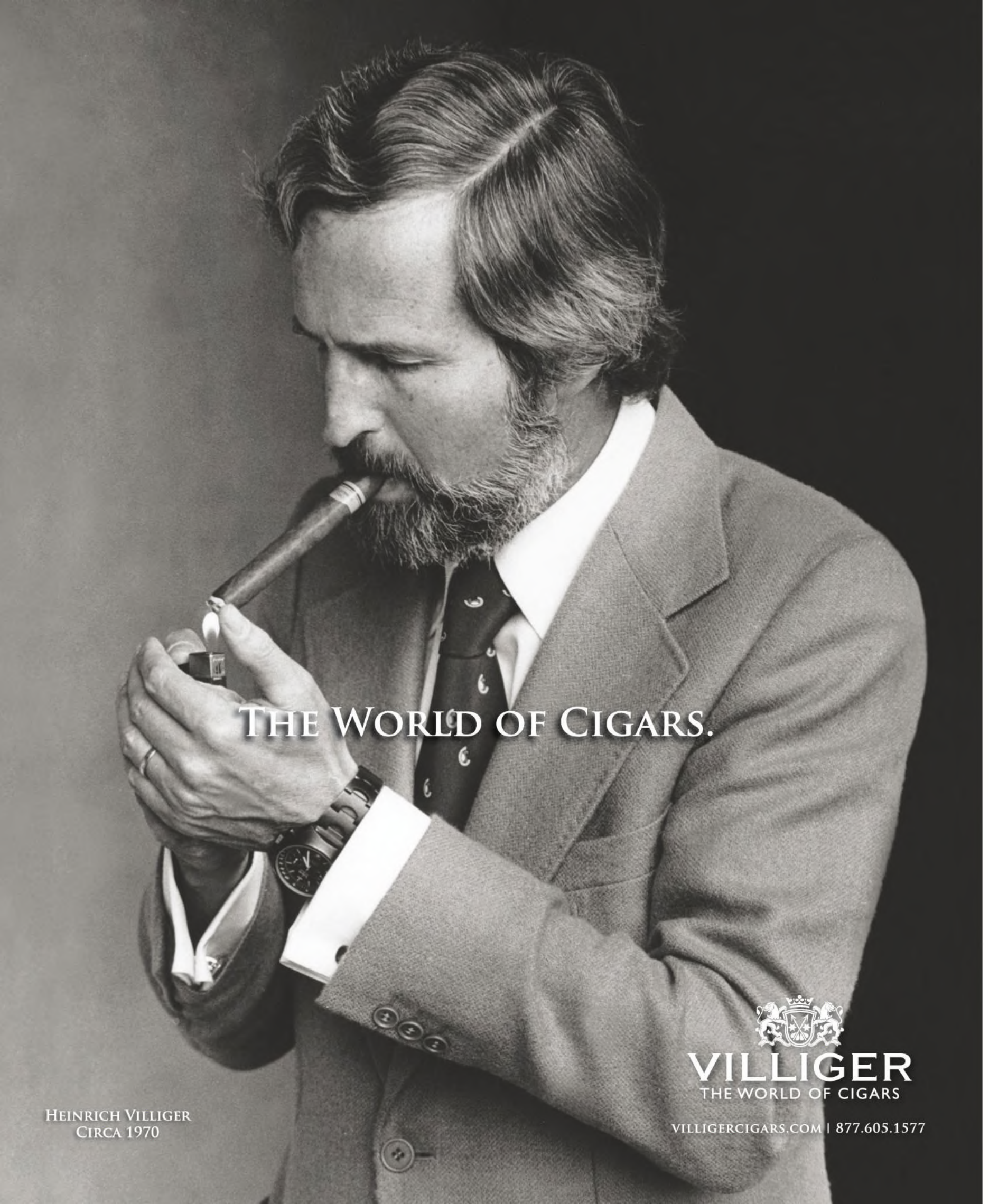
Visit bmwusa.com/bmw/7series

—Paul A. Eisenstein



AJ FERNANDEZ





THE WORLD OF CIGARS.

HEINRICH VILLIGER
CIRCA 1970



VILLIGER
THE WORLD OF CIGARS

VILLIGERCIGARS.COM | 877.605.1577



Cigar Jar Humidors

Sometimes cigars come packaged in ceramic, glass or porcelain jars that typically end up as decorations in a smoking room. They look good lined up on the shelf in your man cave. But using these containers as ornaments is rather like keeping a classic car as a showpiece and never using it on the open road. It's especially a shame since turning a jar into a working humidor is rather easily done.

Contemporary consumers have the luxury of refilling, and reusing, their cigar jars time and time again, thanks to modern humidification technologies. In transforming your jars into full-fledged humidors, you're actually carrying on an old Cuban cigar tradition that dates back to the early 1900s, when Cuban cigar brand H. Upmann first introduced the glass "Amatista-style" jar to the cigar-smoking public. The jars were lined with Spanish cedar and sealed tight (to block out sunlight and promote ideal humidity for the cigars within) and marketed as "factory fresh" to consumers.

While Spanish cedar inserts and a firm-fitting lid are still important elements of an effective cigar jar, new tools like Boveda packets allow jar owners to create low-maintenance, humidity-controlled environments

without any installation or setup. Simply toss a Boveda packet with the desired RH level into your jar and close the lid. Easy.

Another method is to mount a small humidification device to the inner lid of your cigar jar. These devices are a bit less modern, but still effective, and run on distilled water or propylene glycol solution. They come in two types, either filled with silica gel or superabsorbent polymers, and both have the ability to absorb and emit humidity.

Easier still (but more expensive) is to purchase a cigar jar that ships with a humidification device already included. The three jars pictured here—Viaje Skull and Bones Ten Ton Tess (\$275, 19 cigars), Warped Jaridor (\$150, empty) and Atabey Brujos Porcelain Jar (\$625, 25 cigars)—all come with humidification devices preinstalled underneath the lid of the jar.

With all of the options comes the sense of breathing new life into the old by carrying on a legacy of style and elegance that stretches back generations. And besides, now you can hide more cigars around the house.

Visit atabeycigars.com, bovedainc.com, viajecigars.com and warpedcigars.com

—David Clough

WINE SPECTATOR & CIGAR AFICIONADO
present

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL

ELS FOR AUTISM PRO-AM

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016

OLD PALM GOLF CLUB • PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA

SOLD
OUT

**PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT
ELS FOR AUTISM FOUNDATION**

CO-CHAIRMEN: *Ernie and Liezl Els*
HONORARY CHAIRMAN: *Johann Rupert*
EVENT CHAIRMAN: *Marvin R. Shanken*

FOUNDING SPONSORS:
M. Shanken Communications, Inc.
The Richemont Group





Steinway Spirio Player Piano

Player pianos, even the so-called superior ones, have always had the same problem—rigidity. While a self-playing piano may get most of the notes right for, say, the Liszt Piano Concerto No. 1, it's guaranteed to be a flat, robotic rendition that lacks the dimension and feeling of a live performance. It might also miss a note or two during complicated runs up or down the keys. Perhaps the average enthusiast never realized there was a problem with today's player pianos, but Steinway & Sons sure did—and they've solved it with the Steinway Spirio.

Steinway bills the Spirio as the world's finest player piano, but on some level, the company doesn't even consider it a traditional player piano because it performs just like a live concert pianist through live sampling technology. In other words, a real pianist will sit down to a Steinway studio piano designed to digitally capture that particular performance. The piece is then recorded, edited and released in high-resolution, using a proprietary data format that captures the finest details from each artist's performance. Once it's logged, the piece becomes part of Steinway's library of performances. It's like being able to conjure a pianist right in your living room at will, giving you all the dynamics and nuance of a live concert. Delicate peddling, subtle phrasing, soft trills and thundering fortissimos are not a problem for the Spirio.

The playback precision is the result of numerous technological developments, including immunity to varying line voltage, closed-loop proportional pedaling and thermal compensation.

Each Spirio comes with an iPad to control the system and access the inventory of 1,700 live performances by dedicated Steinway artists. Musical genres range from classical to jazz, and new music files are automatically added to the list—at no additional charge—as they become available.

And don't worry about aesthetics. Unless you're looking for it, chances are, you'll never notice the electronic module is even there. The Spirio player system unit is integrated during the manufacturing process and is cleverly hidden from view.

In the U.S. market, Spirio is offered (with an additional expenditure of about \$15,000) on two existing classic acoustic Steinway models. Including the Spirio, the Model M music room grand costs \$84,000 and the Model B medium grand is \$116,000.

Should you want to play the piano yourself, Steinway assures that the Spirio module in no way affects its natural touch or sound. Four complimentary service appointments come with each Spirio as well.

Visit www.steinwayspirio.com

—Gregory Mottola



EVOLUTION OF AN ICON™

The same great blend of the past.

A new, modern look for the future.

We are the icon, and we're proud of it.

Proud of our heritage. Our painstaking approach.

And, of course, our cigars. Cigars of the highest quality,

handcrafted by the world's most skilled artisans.

And while we have evolved the look of our brand,

the very passion that has gone into making Macanudo

an icon is something that will never change.



MACANUDO
MONTEGO Y CIA

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar
Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The Mouth
And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale.

WWW.MACANUDO.COM



©2016 General Cigar Co., Inc.



Bauman Rare Books

When someone tries to convince me of the pleasure of reading a book online or with a Nook, I wonder if he ever held a rare book in his hands and felt its aesthetic appeal. Hold the volume regarded by many as the greatest work of philosophy ever written: the first English edition of Plato's *Republic* that is displayed in a glass case at Bauman Rare Books on 535 Madison Avenue in New York. Not only are Plato's words timeless, but the feel of the pages and the sturdy red Morocco spine also resonate. "Take James Joyce's *Ulysses* from 1922," says Eric Pedersen, a bookseller at Bauman. "You can read it on a screen or with a Nook, but there is nothing like holding the first edition in your hands, reading the words as they first appeared in print." Only 1,000 copies were printed in the first edition, of which Joyce signed just 100. Bauman just sold a signed copy for \$268,000; an unsigned copy fetches from \$90,000 to \$100,000. No matter how your taste runs, Bauman serves up a feast. Drawn to American literature? Try a first printing of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in the original dust jacket (\$24,000) or Ken Kesey's rebellious *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (\$7,000 with jacket). Leaning toward Americana? *The Federalist*, with 85 essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, remains an inestimably important historical document and commands \$225,000 for its two volumes.

For ancient fare there's Thucydides' *Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre* or Plato's *Republic*, printed in Glasgow in 1763 by the Foulis Press (\$25,000).

Sports classics abound, like America's *National Game*, written by Albert Spalding in 1911. Signed by Spalding, the first edition—a veritable bargain at \$2,800—boasts a handsome blue and gold binding and includes over 100 illustrations and foldout plates. Pedersen offers four criteria that give books value. (1) Priority, is this its first appearance? (2) Condition. (3) Completeness: Does it have everything it came with? (4) Historical Importance.

The rest is subjective. "Part of the beauty of books is that it's a connection that you make with it," says Pedersen. "It's the time you spend with the author and their words."

Visit baumanrarebooks.com

—Kenneth A. Shouler

He repairs the casks that breathe character into The Balvenie.

RICHARD ANDERSON, COOPER AT
THE BALVENIE FOR 18 YEARS.

His hands know American oak from European. They hold knowledge from the routine of repairing leaking staves and cracked ends. Only the cooper's touch is trusted to get the best from the wood, releasing the flavours within to mature the spirit, so it becomes The Balvenie.

HANDCRAFTED AT THE BALVENIE





NESTOR MIRANDA
COLLECTION

 /nestormirandacollection  @miamicigar  @miamicigar

BROUGHT TO YOU BY MIAMI CIGAR & COMPANY

#OneLife

You only get *One Life*. How will you live yours?



Meat Grinders

Marketers have no shortage of cooking gizmo and gimmicks—juicers and boilers, choppers and graters—designed for some very specific task, but destined to wind up on a shelf. Men who cook tend to resist this and pare their tools down to the few that satisfy a slew of needs: a sharp knife, an all-purpose skillet, a trusty grill. If there's one implement we can suggest adding to your arsenal it's a meat grinder.

First of all, it frees you from the tyranny of supermarket ground meat. When you grind your own you're free to choose not only the cut of meat and its percentage of fat (more fat means more flavor), but you control how chunky or fine the beef comes out. And talk about fresh, there's nothing like using meat right off the grinder with none of the gaminess that comes with store-bought ground meat. For that matter, your burgers don't have to be beef at all any more, but any combination of cuts (pork, lamb, turkey, chicken, veal). And it's not just burger cravers who profit from a good grinder. You can mill vegetables, dried fruit (especially cranberry), grains as fillers and precooked meat for hashes or as salad toppings.

The Holy Grail for grinder owners is to make sausage. Again, gather your own choice ingredients, grind them, season them to taste and then

grind again to mingle the flavors. A third pass through the mechanism serves to extrude meat into the casing that you place around the outlet. Tie the sausages off and you can grill that night.

As the machines aren't very complicated—it's essentially a turn-screw forcing food through a cutting plate—you can go old school and buy one with a hand crank or choose the ease of a model with an electric motor. You'll want a variety of cutting plates to allow more opportunity for fine-tuning and a machine that breaks down easily for cleaning. We like the Megaforce 3000 (pictured, \$180) from STX International for its combination of power (3,000 watts), fan cooling, versatility (three speeds) and durability (all-metal machine components).

Visit stxinternational.com

—Jack Bettridge





#1 Cigar of the Year

cigar
aficionado
RATED 96

OLIVA[®]
Serie V
MELANIO
GRAN RESERVA LIMITADA

Five years in the making, the
Serie V Melanio is sure to exceed
your highest expectations.



www.olivacigar.com

Oliva Cigar Co. 2015

Tie Your Own Flies

Every fisherman knows the primal joy of reeling in a fish hearty enough to eat. But true angler's nirvana comes only when supper is caught using flies you've crafted with your own two hands. And in the dead of winter, when your local fishing spot is frozen over and there isn't much you can do to quell those yearnings for downstream drifts and tight lines, retiring to your study with a stiff drink and the requisite fly-tying materials can be a tranquil diversion.

What may seem like an arcane procedure best left to professionals is actually relatively doable, promises one expert in the field. Tom Rosenbauer, host of the Orvis Fly Fishing Podcast and author of *The Orvis Fly-Tying Guide*, says he teaches newcomers how to tie a working fly in only 30 minutes. "Start with a simple pattern like the Wooly Bugger or San Juan worm," he advises. "After you become comfortable, tweak the patterns to see if you catch more fish using your own variation."

An all-inclusive set, like the Orvis Fly-Tying Kit (\$198), provides all of the tools you'll need. The essential tying vise fastens to the side of your desk and grips all varieties of hooks. A bobbin holds the spool of thread and feeds it through a pinhole, allowing you to accurately wrap the thread around the hook. The kit includes a variety of tying materials—from elk and marabou fur to pheasant tail—as well as an instructional DVD for tying 16 popular fly patterns.

Artificial flies are tied using threads to secure furs and synthetic fibers to fishing hooks. Rosenbauer will try anything from dryer lint to cat hair as material for his flies. Imitator flies resemble critters indigenous to the ecosystem of the fish. Attractors are meant to captivate and provoke the fish with vibrant colors and elaborate patterns. The fly-tying novice should learn simple patterns of both varieties to ensure they've stocked up a diverse arsenal come spring. Anglers will subtly tweak fly patterns to find which variation renders the best result. The possibilities are endless, and there's only one rule: you must learn to enjoy the process.

Together with a little mood music, says Rosenbauer, "fly-tying is wonderful therapy for the lives we live."

Visit orvis.com/fly-tying-kits

—Blake Droesch

JEFF HARRIS



The Farris Project

"Keep spreading the good vibes"

Phase 2

tedscigars.com/phase-2

15

16



My Grandmother Lois Farris' attitude inspired the FARRIS cigar. "Happiness is a choice, don't borrow trouble"... that was Lois.

We encouraged cigar lovers to share their stories of inspiration - the result has been overwhelming.

This fall, these FARRIS storytellers came to Louisville, KY to personally share and document their stories on film with Ted. Watch and share this new "Phase 2" video series!

tedscigars.com/phase-2

Share your story and receive a **FARRIS CIGAR!**

Scan the QR code to watch the new phase 2 video series.



15

16

Special thanks to Randy, Mike, Mark, Paul, and Nathan for being part of The FARRIS Project.

ted's® cigars

tedscigars.com

Simply Fine Cigars for over 20 Years

No Pretense... Throw away the band and enjoy - Ted



the ted's select collection
connecticut shade • farris • maduro



ALEC BRADLEY

Our family is great,
we love that you agree.



alecbradleycigar

FOLLOWING

212 likes

They are truly amazing cigars and it is humbling to think about all the hard work it takes to get this tobacco from the ground to my hand. Thank you for being masters of your trade!

perietta_m @alecbradleycigar their hard work + sacrifices r appreciated! 🍷🍷

mongrelbreed Well done. It's good to see and appreciate the real work that goes into pumping out some of the best sticks in the world. #AB

livingtheluxurybrown Thank you all for producing one of life's little pleasures for us! 🍷

johnny_confidence What he said! 🍷🍷

alex_santiago I've been a fan of Alec Bradley Cigars since my first Prensado. Seeing this and how you honor your workers, the backbone of the company's success, makes me an even bigger fan. Great work! 🍷

♡ Add a comment...

...



alecbradleycigar

FOLLOWING

230 likes

svale0606 Keep up the good work! I definitely appreciate all the hard work that make you guys the best. Thank you.

bevsandburns Love the cigars, love the company...we @bevsandburns appreciate this family!

stevejacksun Your hard work does not go unnoticed and your passion for excellence makes my choice of cigars a no brainer. The people @alecbradleycigar and us customers are lucky to have devoted people like yourselves as part of the family!! I will be a loyal customer for life!! Thank you all.

aristotle1974 All the way from Melbourne Australia, I wanted to say thank you to the Alec Bradley workers who do a magnificent job, planting, caring, picking tobacco and making beautiful cigars! Fantastic work, we all appreciate your tireless efforts, thank you amigos

♡ Add a comment...

...



alecbradleycigar

FOLLOWING

249 likes

billwallace09 This is another reason why I'll buy Alec Bradley cigars. Recognizing the work force is pure leadership. I really appreciate what you do.

johnny_confidence Give that young man a hug from me and a dozen of my pals

sight11 @billwallace09 solid comment, my dude

billwallace09 @sight11 yeah man, we need some more love in this world. Things are getting crazy. They need to smoke a cigar and chill. Just for this, my next purchase will be some more Alec Bradley.

sight11 @billwallace09 🍷🍷. My favorite by Alec Bradley is the 1997 Harvest Selection. You ever try it?

whiskeyloot WOW!

LIVE TRUE.

ALECBRADLEY.COM | f t i y t u

Paul Stuart Estate Jacket

For variations in form and function when it comes to men's clothes, always look to outerwear. That's because so much of it is handed down to us from specific uses, typically relating to sports or the military. Soldiers gave us trench coats, sailors passed on pea coats and horsemen handed down their hacking jackets and polo coats, etc. One top garment that we hope will gain more traction—even while it's not as ambitious in terms of being activewear—is the estate jacket that Paul Stuart, the New York City menswear mecca is now showing.

The name conjures up an image of the kind of garb that the lord of Downton Abbey would throw on before going out to survey his fief. And that would be a good use for it—except that so few of us own estates anymore. The jacket could almost be a shooting coat, but it lacks such utilitarian detail as leather shoulder pads and cloth rings to hang shotgun shells from. No, the estate jacket can't claim much pretension of specialized function, unless that's how you would categorize kicking around the outdoors and looking great. But for that use, this jacket is suited to a T.

The estate jacket doesn't stop there, however. It has the kind of town-and-country styling suitable for urban use as well. It also has the makeup to bridge three seasons—from late fall to early spring—without looking out of place in any. Although it probably won't cover your suit jacket, it's sophisticated enough to show off in more casual office settings. And its insouciant demeanor is perfect for nightlife.

Paul Stuart sources its version (\$1,387) from the realm of landed gentry—England—and outfits it with a range of fine details. Made of formidable wool, it comes in an outdoor-appropriate olive houndstooth check. The interliner is rainproof and microsuede covers the collar and trim. The front closure is a wind-resistant zipper paired with snaps, and snaps also secure the pouch pockets. In the back, the side vents can be unsnapped, so you could, in fact, undo them, mount your horse and survey your estate.

Visit paulstuart.com

—Jack Bettridge





Breitling Emergency II

Fans of James Bond may recall Breitling's role in 1965's *Thunderball*. The ingenious Q outfitted the brand's Top Time dive watch with a Geiger counter, so the spy could locate stolen atomic bombs. The prop sold at auction for \$160,000, but you can buy a working Breitling watch at retail that offers its own real-life gadgetry worthy of 007. The Emergency II (\$15,825 in steel with rubber strap) will transmit a radio call for wearers (secret agents or not) in distress.

Breitling spent years developing the followup to the original 1995 Emergency, which works on the 121.5 MHz international air distress frequency. The next-generation Emergency II houses a dual personal locator beacon (PLB) that operates on that frequency (the most reliable for homing in on those in distress) and the 406 MHz emergency beacon, which transmits digital information to orbiting satellites in compliance with the Cospas-Sarsat international satellite alert system.

Thierry Prissert, president of Breitling USA, explains that the brand collaborated with an institute specializing in aerospace, defense and industry to create circuitry small enough for the watch to house the dual PLB and still be comfortable. The brand was similarly challenged by the need to incorporate two antennas in the watch's 51-millimeter titanium case. Heightened energy demands also required the development of an innovative rechargeable battery system that is 1,000 times more power-

ful than the cells that are typically used in wristwatches.

To activate the beacon, you unscrew the cap on the lower right side of the case, extend the main antenna to the correct length, and the second antenna on the opposite side releases and activates the transmitter.

Emergency II's transmitter system is designed to operate independently of the electronic chronograph with functions that include a 12/24-hour analog and digital display, 1/100th second chronograph, alarm, timer, second time zone, and more, all separately powered by Breitling's COSC-certified SuperQuartz movement, which the brand claims is 10 times more accurate than a standard quartz movement.

Release of the new watch in the U.S. was delayed for two years as Breitling awaited FCC approval. The holdup was that a wrist-worn dual PLB was unique and had no certification standards or category within the FCC. Prissert adds that Breitling ultimately requested a special waiver to sell the timepiece in its own category.

According to Breitling, the original Emergency has saved the lives of more than 20 people. Emergency II doubles down on that technology, combining peace of mind for pilots and adventurers with the swaggering sex appeal of a secret agent.

Visit breitling.com

—Laurie Kahle

A Superb Milestone

*Cuatro Cinco is an extraordinary achievement
by Fábrica Joya de Nicaragua.
Originally released as Edición Limitada,
it commemorated 45 years
of cigar manufacturing.*

*Now, we proudly present
Reserva Especial, a carefully
modified recipe featuring
select Grade A fillers
aged within vintage
oak barrels.*



*This super-premium blend
delivers subtle, but extraordinarily enchanting
woody notes, sweet flavors
and a velvety finish.*

*Celebrate
your own Superb Milestones
with ours*



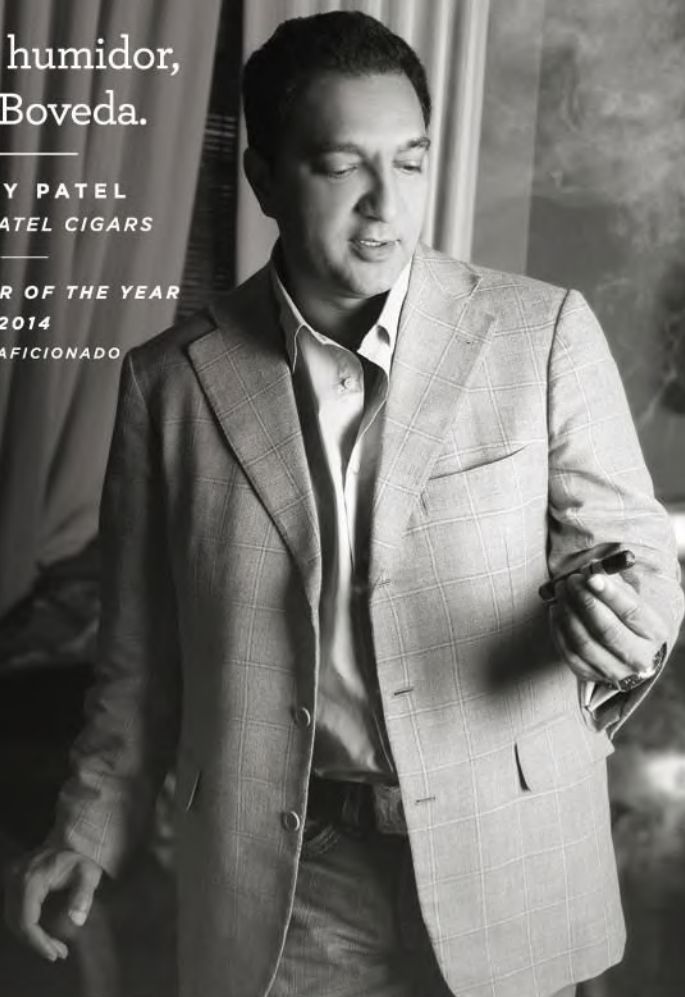
Watch our video at www.CuatroCinco.com



For my humidor,
I use Boveda.

ROCKY PATEL
ROCKY PATEL CIGARS

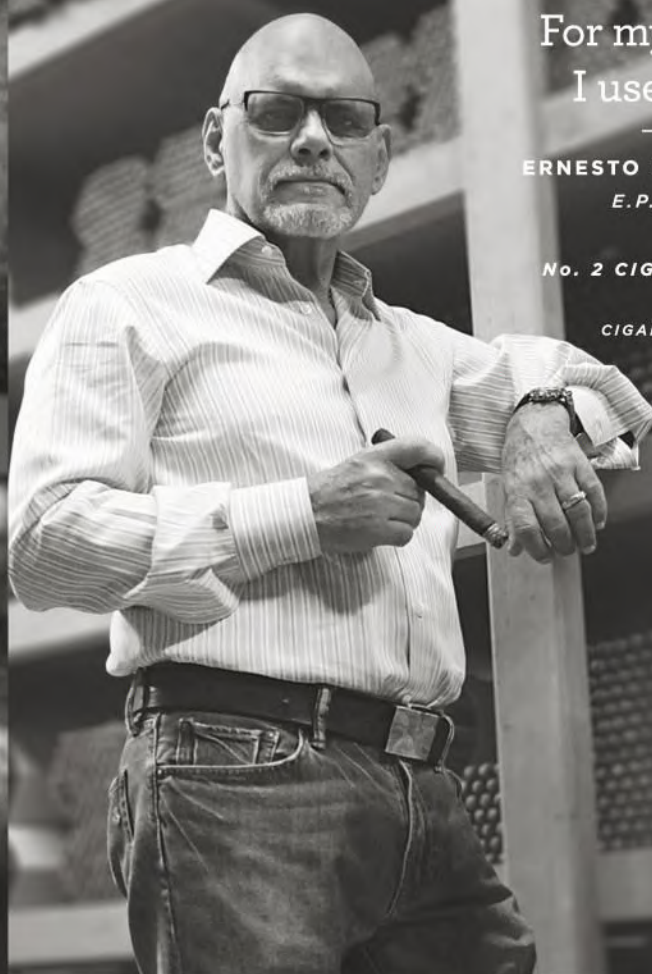
No. 5 CIGAR OF THE YEAR
2014
CIGAR AFICIONADO



For my humidor,
I use Boveda.

ERNESTO PEREZ-CARRILLO
E.P. CARRILLO

No. 2 CIGAR OF THE YEAR
2014
CIGAR AFICIONADO



For my humidor,
I use Boveda.

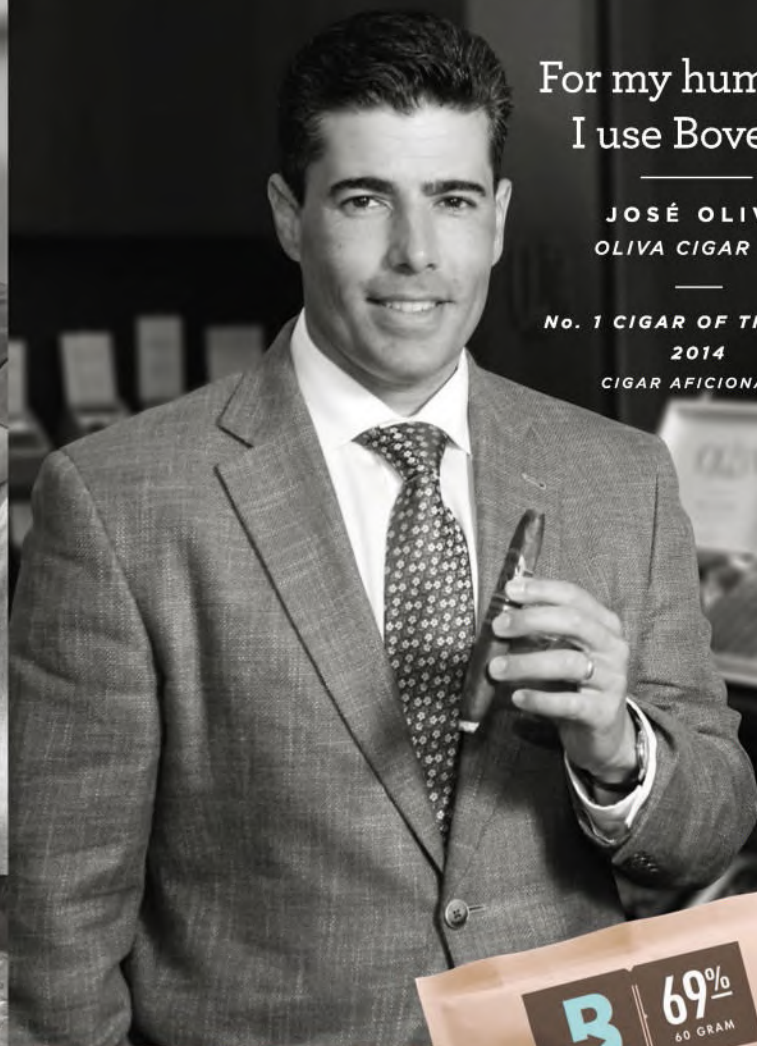
LITTO GOMEZ
LA FLOR DOMINICANA



For my humidor,
I use Boveda.

JOSÉ OLIVA
OLIVA CIGAR CO.

No. 1 CIGAR OF THE YEAR
2014
CIGAR AFICIONADO



TRYBOVEDA.COM

COPYRIGHT 2015 BOVEDA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

The Beer Cooler

The calendar is full of entertainment occasions when sophisticated cocktails calling for a slew of specialized gear are in order, but when it's Super Bowl time the drinking palate narrows to beer. And for that you have one essential equipment concern: a cooler. A good beer cooler provides a communal place for guests to service their beverage needs. It keeps them out of the kitchen and takes the strain off the refrigerator. Of course, all sorts of Styrofoam numbers will do the job, but a Super Bowl-worthy cooler does it with efficiency, with panache and with a fair number of bells and whistles.

Obviously, cooling ability is a chief criterion. That stat is generally related in days that ice will remain in the box, which is a function of thickness of insulation—meaning an attendant loss of beer space. You may want to trade off for more room—unless you're planning a shindig to last more than three days. Best for ice longevity are coolers meant for camping, like the imposing-sounding Yeti. Buying that type of cooler also gets you mold-defeating gaskets and closures resistant to bear attacks, capabilities you might forgo depending on the quality of your guests.

For the purposes of a short party consider exchanging ruggedness for coolers like steel-covered Coleman's that offer more in the looks department. But don't forget to consider convenient features. Wheels or casters come in handy when the cooler is weighted down with cold brew—especially if yours is a movable fiesta. Failing that, get heavy-duty handles for lifting. The drain plug should be hose-compatible for easy emptying when the party breaks up. Almost essential is a built-in bottle opener (otherwise expect to have rummagers in your kitchen drawers).

The Igloo Party Bar Cooler (pictured, \$199) has an intriguing new feature: the LiddUp LED light system, which illuminates its contents without adding undue heat to the ice compartment. Also convenient are the removable dividers and lid—meaning you can segregate Joe Six Pack beers from chichi craft brews for ease in locating, which in turn means the cover is not open as long. If only you could separate guests who are ardent fans when the game heats up.

Visit igloopartybar.com

—Jack Bettridge





ORO

THE WORDS "REFINED POWER" SHINE
THROUGH THIS CIGAR LIKE THE GOLD TUBES
THAT ENCASE THEM. A TRUE POWERHOUSE
BACKED WITH EXTRAORDINARY FLAVOR.



Chisel® Tubo
54 x 6



Tubo No. 6 Natural
54 x 6



Tubo No. 6 Maduro
54 x 6



TOP 25

BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF HARRIS AND JOHN CURRY



After testing hundreds of cigars throughout 2015, in the end one stood tall after our final blind tasting to be named Cigar of the Year

It's one thing to make a good cigar. It's something else to make a great cigar. But it's something else entirely to make a great cigar over and over again. And that kind of consistency is precisely what is required to make CIGAR AFICIONADO'S list of Top 25 cigars.

The process is neither pageant nor popularity contest. Rather, it's best characterized as a tournament, as the highest-scoring cigars of 2015 are pitted against one another and required to perform at the same high level repeatedly.

To establish candidates, we first looked back upon the 744 cigars we reviewed in the pages of CIGAR AFICIONADO and *Cigar Insider* in calendar year 2015. (Cigars rated in the final months of 2014 in *Cigar Insider* were also considered, as the final issues of that newsletter are published after Top 25 tastings are concluded.) We mined the list for cigars that earned 91 points or higher, our minimal criteria for entry. Then, we examined the list of potential candidates and eliminated duplicates, keeping the highest-scoring cigars for each brand. We also disqualified any cigars that are no longer on the market,

or those that were made in such small quantities that they were no longer available. Once the candidate cigars were in place, the smoking began.

Like every year, our tasting coordinator purchased the cigars at retail, stripped them of their bands, replaced them with generic number-coded labels and passed them out to a panel of senior tasters. This blind tasting process is the same method used during normal CIGAR AFICIONADO evaluations during the year, only the competition for Top 25 is much fiercer—all the cigars vying for placement are excellent.

After smoking through a cadre of very impressive cigars, only the best were able to make it through elimination. It's a long, exacting process, and one that requires our panel of tasters to scrutinize every dimension of the cigar, from combustion and complexity to structure and resonance.

The Top 25 list here is the result of our analysis and a report of our findings. While styles range from subtle to bold, all 25 of these cigars consistently showed excellence in their own unique way, and every last one is worth a smoke.

When Officer Eder Loor responded to a situation in East Harlem everything seemed under control – until a man on the scene lashed out, driving a knife deep into Officer Loor’s brain. He was taken immediately to The Mount Sinai Hospital, where a team from the Department of Neurosurgery successfully performed emergency cerebrovascular surgery. Since that day, Officer Loor has had a remarkable recovery. He’s grateful to

the doctors at Mount Sinai. But he’s not the only one. His wife, his two children, and the entire city are grateful as well.

1 - 8 0 0 - M D - S I N A I
mountsinai.org/neuro



IT'S

A GOOD THING NEW YORK'S

FINEST WAS IN THE HANDS

OF NEW YORK'S FINEST.



1

MY FATHER LE BIJOU 1922 TORPEDO BOX PRESSED

The original My Father brand was created by Jaime Garcia to honor his father, Pepin. A year later, Pepin decided to honor his own father with an offshoot brand called My Father Le Bijou 1922. Unlike the originals, which wear an Ecuadoran cover leaf, Le Bijou 1922 cigars are darker and stronger. The blend is Nicaraguan from top to bottom, showcasing Cuban-seed wrappers that the Garcia family calls oscuro. Only one size—this torpedo—is box-pressed. Some will say that box-pressing a cigar is only an aesthetic decision. But when the Garcias took this hearty, complex blend, rolled it into a torpedo shape and then gave it a pressing, the result stood out for its ability to deliver complex notes clearly and harmoniously.

The date 1922 denotes the birth year of José Garcia, the father of José “Pepin” Garcia. Le Bijou means “the jewel” in French. And this cigar is emblematic of all the Garcia family has achieved. Pepin started as a roller in Cuba before emigrating to Miami and eventually opening up a tiny rolling gallery in Little Havana. Commercial and critical acclaim for his cigars allowed expansion into Nicaragua. Today, Pepin, Jaime and Janny Garcia lead My Father Cigars, and their factory in Estelí produces millions of cigars a year. Despite rapid growth, the family still takes great care in producing cigars of quality and distinction, which shows in this My Father Le Bijou 1922 Torpedo Box Pressed. It takes a profound understanding of cigar tobaccos to create a smoke that conveys uncanny impressions of dark chocolate-covered raisins, savory leather and a sweet-and-salty finish that resonates on the palate.

This cigar has an ideal combination of power and finesse to make it No. 1. It's the second Cigar of the Year for the Garcias.

RATING: 97

MADE BY: My Father Cigars S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: Nicaragua

BINDER: Nicaragua

FILLER: Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS: 6 1/8" by 52 ring

PRICE: \$11.40



2

Ramon Allones Specially Selected

When it comes to Cuban cigars Ramon Allones isn't exactly a household name, as it's one of the smaller brands coming out of Cuba, but Habanophiles know it well. It's also a cigar that fans of more full-bodied tobacco tend to reach for, and the Specially Selected is probably the most recognized vitola in the Ramon Allones portfolio. Not that the portfolio is terribly large—over the years, official deletions have whittled down the brand to a mere three sizes.

Ramon Allones is as rich in history as it is in flavor. Founded in 1837, it's one of the oldest brands still produced and is credited as the first manufacturer to decorate its boxes with ornate, branded labels. Other cigar companies naturally followed suit and now, more than 150 years later, the branding of cigars and cigar boxes is commonplace.

What is less common, however, is the amount of complex character that the Ramon Allones Specially Selected delivers. The cigars we originally smoked and rated earlier in the year were from a box stamped with a 2013 production date. The Specially Selected cigars we revisited for the Top 25 test were from 2014—and they were quite magnificent. Forget, for a moment, that these cigars are supposed to be strong and rustic by reputation. While there is indeed an intensity to these cigars, the Ramon Allones Specially Selected smokes of 2014 are also dynamic and, at times, elegant. Each puff is layered with earthy espresso bean but notes of marzipan and citrus show the cigar's more sophisticated side.

RATING: 96

MADE BY: n/a

FACTORY LOCATION: Cuba

WRAPPER: Cuba

BINDER: Cuba

FILLER: Cuba

DIMENSIONS: 4 7/8" by 50 ring

PRICE: £15.76



3

CAO Flathead V660 Carb

It's big. It's blocky. And it has the flattest head we've ever seen on a premium cigar. It's also loaded with surprisingly rich, complex tobacco.

The CAO Flathead V660 Carb is one of the bulkiest cigars in the CAO Flathead line, which is made by General Cigar Co. in Nicaragua. General inherited the entire portfolio of CAO's preexisting brands after Swedish Match and ST Cigar Group Holdings merged in 2010. Flathead, however was created under General Cigar by Rick Rodriguez and Ed McKenna. The idea was for the cigars to resemble the engine blocks found in America's classic hot rods, and this is reflected in the packaging as well. Each box looks like an engine and even comes with a vintage-style print of a pinup girl. There is undoubtedly a jovial aspect to the theme, but it would be a mistake to dismiss the Flathead as a novelty.

The cigar is a gutsy blend that starts with a dark Connecticut broadleaf wrapper, a Cuban-seed binder also grown in Connecticut and a combination of Nicaraguan ligero and Dominican Piloto Cubano tobacco. If Rodriguez and McKenna intended the blend to reflect hot rods and muscle cars along with the packaging, we'd say they delivered.

The name Carb 660 is named after the carburetor of a combustion engine and 660 indicates the length and ring gauge. From the first light, this seriously squared-off cigar takes off with notes of ripe fruit, leather and molasses that only gain intensity as it smokes.

RATING: 95

MADE BY: Scandinavian Tobacco Group, Estelí

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf

BINDER: U.S.A./Conn. Habano

FILLER: Nicaragua, Dom. Rep.

DIMENSIONS: 6" by 60 ring

PRICE: \$8.39



4

Arturo Fuente Don Carlos Belicoso

There aren't many cigar brands using high-quality Cameroon wrapper today. It tends to be quite expensive, rough in appearance and temperamental during the fermentation process. But the Fuente family doesn't seem to mind, and there was no better expression of Cameroon wrapper put to market in 2015 than that of the Don Carlos Belicoso. Its wrapper-to-filler ratios resulted in a perfect combination of the Cameroon cover leaf's sweet-and-sour properties along with the Dominican binder and filler which gave the cigar a zesty, nutty quality full of shaved almonds and candied orange peel.

The brand was named after Carlos Fuente Sr., patriarch of the Fuente family. The factory, Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia., is the largest family-owned cigar-making operation in the premium cigar business. Fuente Sr. recently turned 80 years old, and the Don Carlos is said to be blended to his personal taste. The combination of Cameroon and Dominican tobacco has been its hallmark since the brand debuted 30 years ago. The portfolio currently has seven sizes, including a slightly larger torpedo, but there's something about the precise dimensions, ratios and combustion rate of the Belicoso that makes it stand out.

They are aged for no less than a year, and the dark chocolate aroma so prevalent in the aging room certainly emanates off the cold bouquet of each cigar, and recurs on the palate as well. Refined and delicious, it's also enhanced by a nutty, sweet-and-sour finish.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.

FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.

WRAPPER: Cameroon

BINDER: Dom. Rep.

FILLER: Dom. Rep.

DIMENSIONS: 5 3/8" by 52 ring

PRICE: \$11.75



5

Padrón Family Reserve 50 Years Natural

It seems the Padróns are always celebrating something. And when they decide to honor an occasion with a commemorative cigar, it's always nothing short of excellent.

The Padrón Family Reserve 50 Years Natural marks the company's 50th anniversary. Company patriarch José Orlando Padrón began selling fumas-style cigars for 25 cents apiece in Miami, and today he is one of the most respected names in the premium cigar industry. The list of accolades and critical acclaim is beyond impressive, as Padrón has proven itself to be not only a model of excellence, but of consistency. This is the 12th Top 25 list in CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine's history. A Padrón cigar has been named Cigar of the Year three times and has made the Top 10 list every year consecutively.

The Family Reserve began as a box-pressed torpedo only offered at cigar events where a Padrón family member was present. The line was eventually commercialized and now exists in a few sizes.

Astute Padrón fans might remember how the Padrón Family Reserve 50 Years made the 2014 list. Last year, it was the maduro version, but this year, the natural wrapper version of the 50 Years made our list.

These cigars have all the signature traits of a great Padrón: box pressing, perfect draw, plenty of body, and a hearty combination of earth, cocoa bean and coffee. Each note folds into the palate individually and then harmonizes for a sublime experience.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: Tabacos Cubanica S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: Nicaragua

BINDER: Nicaragua

FILLER: Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS: 5" by 54 ring

PRICE: \$25.00



◆ GRAN RESERVA ◆

ELEVATE YOUR

TASTE

WITH OVER

150 YEARS

OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

INTRODUCING MAESTRO DE RON

THE NEWEST GRAN RESERVA RUM FROM BACARDÍ®



LIVE PASSIONATELY. DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

©2016. BACARDÍ, BACARDÍ GRAN RESERVA MAESTRO DE RON TRADE DRESS, BACARDÍ UNTAMEABLE AND THE BAT DEVICE ARE TRADEMARKS OF BACARDÍ AND COMPANY LIMITED. BACARDÍ U.S.A., INC. CORAL GABLES, FL. RUMS - EACH 40% ALC. BY VOL.



BACARDÍ®
UNTAMEABLE
SINCE 1862

6

Illusione Ultra Op. No. 9

When Illusione brand owner Dion Giolito released the Illusione Ultra line, they were the most full-bodied cigars he had ever blended. Big and box-pressed, the cigars came in near-black wrappers and were made in Honduras. That was three years ago and Giolito has made some changes.

While the cigars are still indeed dark in appearance, they aren't quite as close to black as the originals, and the Ultras aren't made in Honduras anymore. Giolito moved the production to the TABSA factory in Nicaragua, citing logistical reasons. But a change in factory can have a significant effect on a cigar. In the case of the Ultra, it seems to have been a change for the better. The cigars performed so well and so consistently that the Ultra Op. No. 9 made it to the No. 6 spot on our list.

The cigar is an imposing toro and one of this year's best examples of a strong, spicy Nicaraguan blend that also has some of the qualities of a pint of coffee stout. The smoke is dense and chewy, and leaves a reverberating peanut-and-caramel aftertaste that sticks to the palate. Since it was first released, Ultra was intended to be a full-bodied offshoot of the core Illusione line, which is still produced in Honduras. Giolito makes fewer Ultras than any other brand in his repertoire.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: Tabacos Valle de Jalapa S.A. (TABSA)

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: Nicaragua

BINDER: Nicaragua

FILLER: Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS: 5 1/2" by 56 ring

PRICE: \$11.50



For video footage of the editors smoking the best cigars of the year and to see our archives of past Top 25 winners, visit CigarAficionado.com

7

The Edge Habano Torpedo

If anyone brought "rustic chic" to the premium cigar world, it was Rocky Patel. When he first released The Edge in 2004, the concept was simple: a roughly hewn wooden box that held 100 unbanded cigars. And they retailed for only \$5 each. It was offered in Corajo or Maduro, came in only two sizes and retailers had to purchase them in 100-count chests. Not that retailers had any trouble selling them. Edge was an instant commercial success, spawning new sizes, new varieties and even new packaging. According to Patel, there were too many other companies trying to copy the rustic presentation, and it was not only confusing customers but affecting business, so he affixed the cigars with an identifying footband.

One of the newest iterations of this popular brand is The Edge Habano. It's the only Edge made entirely from Nicaraguan tobacco, and the blend comes together quite well in the Torpedo size, which is our No. 7 cigar of 2015.

The Edge Habano comes in a chest that looks as though it's made of wood reclaimed from an old barn, and the cigar is reflective of the packaging. The countrified blend is spicy and woody, smacking of hickory and leather. Made with tobacco from three growing regions of Nicaragua—Estelí, Condega and Jalapa—the brand is named for the Cuban-seed wrapper. While it's no longer \$5, it's still a great bargain, delivering a level of richness normally found in cigars twice the price.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: Tabacalera Villa Cubana S.A. (Tavicus)

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: Nicaragua

BINDER: Nicaragua

FILLER: Nicaragua

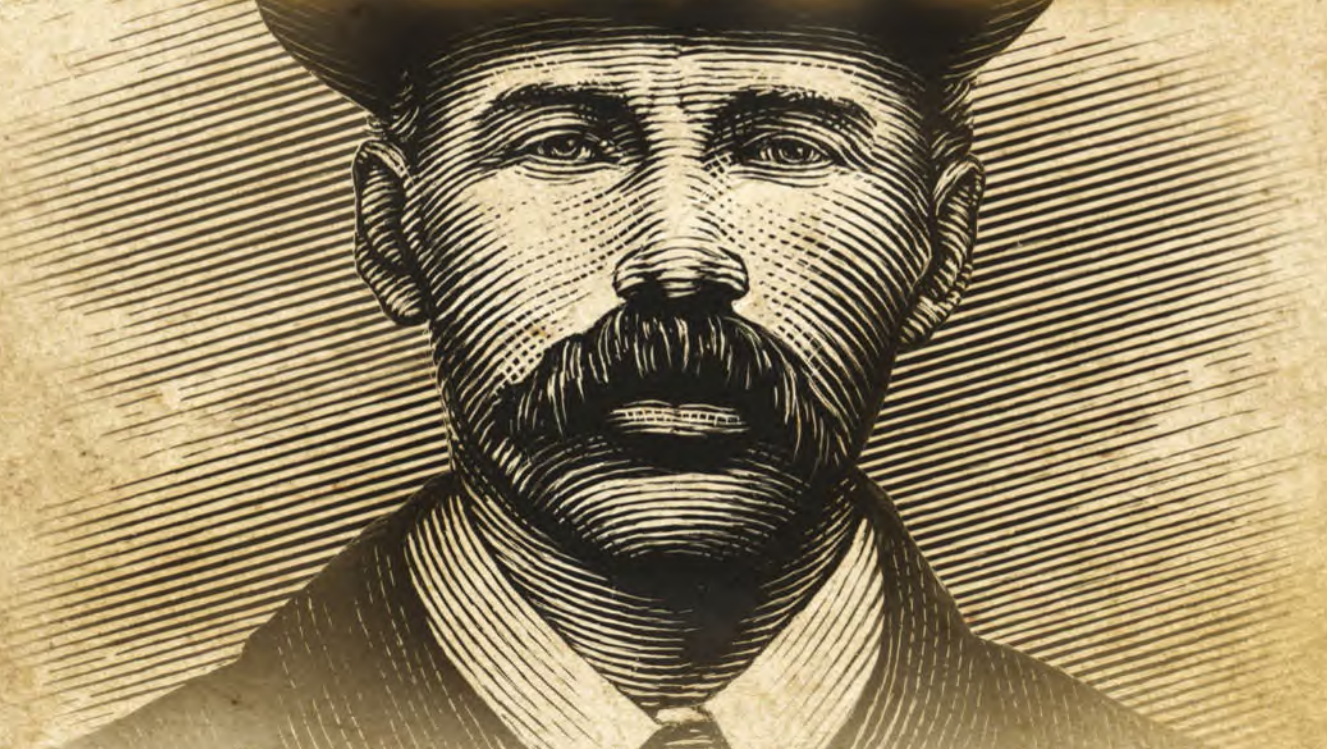
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring

PRICE: \$6.55



IT'S NICE TO BE

WANTED



*"If you're going to be wanted for something,
be wanted for something great."*

—Cornelius Bailey, AKA Straight Shooter

That's exactly what Cornelius Bailey set out to do
five generations ago. And he's been wanted for
growing the finest tobacco ever since.



If you're looking to nab a notoriously great cigar,
your just reward awaits.



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Cigars Are Not A Safe Alternative To Cigarettes.



MAKE IT COUNT

CorneliusAndAnthony.com

8

Ashton Symmetry Robusto

It had been nearly a decade since Ashton Distributors Inc. released a new brand under the official Ashton label, but in 2014, the company decided the market was ready for Ashton Symmetry. The project was four years in the making and was blended by Carlos “Carlito” Fuente Jr. Like all Ashton-branded products, it’s made in the Dominican Republic at Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.

Each cigar is wrapped in a stunningly pristine, reddish brown leaf of Ecuadoran Habano, but the cigar owes its character to a series of specific farms—Chateau de la Fuente, Villa Gonzalez (both in the Dominican Republic) and a Fuente family farm in Nicaragua called Un Buen Vecino. This release marks the first time that an Ashton-branded cigar has ever incorporated Nicaraguan tobacco. The cigar was actually intended for an earlier release, but fires in Fuente’s warehouses destroyed a lot of precious tobacco, some of which was set aside for the Symmetry project.

The idea behind Symmetry is balance. Specifically balance between blending Nicaraguan and Dominican tobaccos, which could easily clash if not done skillfully, though blending can be as much, if not more, of an art as it is a science. Both creativity and textbook precision integrate quite elegantly here, as notes of nougat, toast, chicory and nuts blossom on the palate and stay interesting down to the robusto’s last puff.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.

FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.

WRAPPER: Ecuador

BINDER: Dom. Rep.

FILLER: Dom. Rep., Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS: 5" by 50 ring

PRICE: \$12.00



9

Bolivar Belicoso Fino

Perhaps the single most consistently full-bodied smoke that Cuba produces, the Bolivar Belicoso Fino is a perennial favorite for those favoring strong Cuban smokes. It’s named after Simon Bolivar, who led the effort to liberate much of South America from Spain. Consider him the George Washington of America’s Southern hemisphere. The brand was created in 1902 and features a bold, prominent portrait of the man on both the bands and the boxes.

The Belicoso Fino is the only figurado in the Bolivar line, which is probably why it registers as the strongest smoke across the brand. The fairly heavy ring gauge provides an abundance of smoke while the tapered head concentrates it before it reaches the palate, resulting in an elementally earthy smoke, heavy in minerals, raw cocoa and coffee bean. But the tapered head also adds a piquancy to the already full-bodied cigar.

Strong and earthy, Bolivar Belicoso Finos are offered in both wooden slide-lid cabinets and paper-lined dress boxes. Some believe that the cedary environment of cabinets are ideal for long-term aging, while others prefer the neutrality of paper. The cigars we smoked for this test were from traditional dress boxes (with a March 2015 production stamp), so they were packaged as 13 cigars on the top row, 12 cigars on the bottom, causing the tightly packed Belicosos to take on the kind of squarish, box-pressed appearance that cannot be achieved in a cabinet.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: n/a

FACTORY LOCATION: Cuba

WRAPPER: Cuba

BINDER: Cuba

FILLER: Cuba

DIMENSIONS: 5 1/2" by 52 ring

PRICE: £17.96



10

Liga Privada No. 9 Corona Doble

Look closely at the band of the Liga Privada No. 9. The words “Hecho Exclusivamente Para El Jefe” are printed in small font. It translates to, “Made Exclusively For The Boss.” In this case, the boss was Drew Estate’s former president. He’s no longer with the company and the boss is now Swisher International (which acquired Drew Estate last year), but the cigar remains on the market. And why shouldn’t it? It has a fiercely loyal following that’s gone way beyond cult status, and La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate in Nicaragua can’t make enough of them. The bands also resemble the type of industrial labels found in distillation plants and tasting laboratories, thus emphasizing the notion of Ligas being intended for internal consumption.

The look and story behind Liga Privadas intrigued cigar smokers everywhere, but so did the cigar itself. Each one is a dark and ominous shade that can go from dark brown to an oily black. They’re solid to the touch and packed tightly with loads of hearty tobacco, yet still draw beautifully. It’s one of the heaviest blends on the market and is bound by a gutsy Connecticut broadleaf wrapper and Brazilian Mata Fina binder. Every puff of the Corona Doble seems to make a bold statement with a complex range of strong earthy flavors, a sweet quality redolent of perique tobacco and a sweet tarry finish.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf

BINDER: Brazil

FILLER: Honduras, Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS: 7" by 54 ring

PRICE: \$16.70

TOP 25 AT A GLANCE

1	My Father Le Bijou 1922 Torpedo Box Pressed	Nicaragua	\$11.40	6 1/8" by 52 ring	97
2	Ramon Allones Specially Selected	Cuba	£15.76	4 7/8" by 50 ring	96
3	CAO Flathead V660 Carb	Nicaragua	\$8.39	6" by 60 ring	95
4	Arturo Fuente Don Carlos Belicoso	Dom. Rep.	\$11.75	5 3/8" by 52 ring	94
5	Padrón Family Reserve 50 Years Natural	Nicaragua	\$25.00	5" by 54 ring	94
6	Illusione Ultra Op. No. 9	Nicaragua	\$11.50	5 1/2" by 56 ring	94
7	The Edge Habano Torpedo	Nicaragua	\$6.55	6" by 52 ring	94
8	Ashton Symmetry Robusto	Dom. Rep.	\$12.00	5" by 50 ring	94
9	Bolivar Belicoso Fino	Cuba	£17.96	5 1/2" by 52 ring	94
10	Liga Privada No. 9 Corona Doble	Nicaragua	\$16.70	7" by 54 ring	94
11	Hammer + Sickle Tradición Serie Churchill	Dom. Rep.	\$8.99	7" by 48 ring	94
12	La Bohème Pittore	Dom. Rep.	\$11.94	5 1/8" by 52 ring	94
13	Laranja Reserva Toro	Nicaragua	\$10.90	6" by 52 ring	94
14	Trinidad Vigía	Cuba	£20.90	4 3/8" by 54 ring	94
15	Alec Bradley Sanctum Toro	Honduras	\$7.75	6" by 52 ring	93
16	Avo Syncro Nicaragua Toro	Dom. Rep.	\$9.90	6" by 54 ring	93
17	La Mission du L'Atelier 1959	Nicaragua	\$8.00	4 3/4" by 52 ring	93
18	Heritage by Dunhill Robusto	Honduras	\$10.15	5" by 50 ring	93
19	The King is Dead The Last Payday	Dom. Rep.	\$10.50	6" by 52 ring	93
20	Espada by Montecristo Quillon	Nicaragua	\$12.70	7" by 56 ring	92
21	Nat Sherman Timeless Collection Nicaragua 652T	Nicaragua	\$8.50	6" by 52 ring	92
22	Padilla Miami 8&11 Torpedo	U.S.A.	\$14.30	6 1/2" by 54 ring	92
23	NUB Cameroon 358	Nicaragua	\$5.47	3 3/4" by 58 ring	92
24	La Flor Dominicana Coronado Corona Especial	Dom. Rep.	\$8.80	5 7/8" by 47 ring	92
25	Sublimes Robusto Extra	Nicaragua	\$6.90	5 1/4" by 52 ring	92



BOLDNESS BURNS ANYTIME

**KICKSTART YOUR NEXT BOLD JOURNEY WITH
THE INTENSE FLAVOR OF CAMACHO CONNECTICUT.**

Every journey begins somewhere. And where that is, can mean the difference between a life merely lived... and a life lived loud. Loaded with rich flavors from Generoso and Alemán Ligero tobaccos, bound by the legendary strength of our Original Corojo, and wrapped in a high-grade Connecticut leaf grown in Ecuador, this is one cigar with an intense flavor that backs down to no one. A wake up call to make every journey a bold one.

CAMACHO
LIVE LOUD



SHARE YOUR BOLD JOURNEY #BOLDANYTIME
CAMACHOCIGARS.COM



Hammer + Sickie Tradición Serie Churchill

The Top 25 list is often a combination of classic cigar sizes and more experimental shapes. As the brand name indicates, Hammer + Sickie has opted for tradition over trend with its Tradición Serie Churchill. It isn't a scaled up, modern interpretation of a Churchill, as others have created, but stays within traditional parameters. Eric Hanson, who released his first Hammer + Sickie brand

in 2010, has adopted the symbol of Russia as the cigar's logo. He points out that the hammer and sickle does not represent the Soviet Union (which incorporated a star), but symbolizes Russia's industrial north and agrarian south. For him, it's a heritage symbol and not political. The Churchill is tasty, but understated with a floral quality, touches of nutmeg and a sweet, earthy aftertaste.

11

RATING: 94
MADE BY: TabDom

FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.

WRAPPER: Ecuador

BINDER: Dom. Rep.

FILLER: Dom. Rep.

DIMENSIONS: 7" by 48 ring

PRICE: \$8.99


La Bohème Pittore

Fans of the opera La Bohème have their favorite acts the way fans of the La Bohème cigar line have their favorite sizes. For us, the cigar that gave the finest performance was Pittore. In the opera, Pittore is Marcello the painter. But in the cigar world, Pittore is a memorable smoke made with well-aged tobaccos from the inventories of José "Jochy" Blanco in the Dominican Republic. The

combination of Ecuadoran Habano wrapper and Cuban-seed tobaccos has all the dynamic range of an operatic performance, hitting baritone notes like earth and ripe fruit, all the way to bright soprano tones of spice, ending with a midrange nutty finish. For added romance, brand owner Rafael Nodal took the art from a discontinued vintage Cuban brand and repurposed it for La Bohème.

12

RATING: 94
MADE BY: Tabacalera Palma

FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.

WRAPPER: Ecuador

BINDER: Dom. Rep.

FILLER: Dom. Rep.

DIMENSIONS: 5 1/8" by 52 ring

PRICE: \$11.94


Laranja Reserva Toro

Laranja is the Portuguese word for orange, but it's also an interesting brand from Espinosa Cigars. According to brand owner Erik Espinosa, the Laranja Reserva's all-Nicaraguan blend is covered in a Brazilian "Laranja" wrapper. If you've never heard of Brazilian Laranja, it's because it doesn't really exist. Laranja is simply the new name that Espinosa gave this particular wrapper type

because of its unique orange hue. When he first encountered this tobacco, Espinosa was so intrigued by its color and fragrance, that he blended an entire line around the Brazilian wrapper. The Toro serves as a bright and flavorful showcase for the wrapper, offering plenty of graham cracker flavor. But, as the wrapper and name suggests, we also detected a distinctly citrus-like quality and zest.

13

RATING: 94
MADE BY: La Zona Cigars S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua

WRAPPER: Brazil

BINDER: Nicaragua

FILLER: Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring

PRICE: \$10.90



BLACK
Cházaro®



IT'S TIME FOR THE SUBLIME SMOKE

www.blackchazarocigars.com.mx

COMING SOON TO FINE TOBACCONIST SHOPS ACROSS AMERICA

cigar aficionado

THE GOOD LIFE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

www.cigaraficionado.com

**FANTASY
SPORTS
BETTING**

**CUBA
EYES
THE U.S.
MARKET**

THE TOP
25
CIGARS
OF 2015

**PLUS 33 CIGARS
UNDER \$6**

**DAMIAN
LEWIS**
ONE IN A
BILLION

**CONGRESSMAN
PETER KING:
RISKS
FACING
AMERICA**

**104
CIGARS
RATED**

There's No Other
Magazine Like It—In The World

Visit CigarAficionado.com to Subscribe

Digital Subscription Available On:



14



Trinidad Vigía

Trinidad is one of the anomalies within Cuba's collection of cigar brands. It started as a commercially unavailable cigar reserved for diplomats and dignitaries. Once the brand was released to the public in 1998, it came in one long, thin size called Fundadores. Then the brand expanded by adding a few more vitolas, only to contract afterward by deleting sizes in 2012. Trinidad's newest

addition, the Vigía is the exact opposite of the Fundadores. Rather than being long and slender, this cigar is short and squat. While it maintains Trinidad's signature pig-tail cap, its heavy ring gauge offers an abundant smoke, lush with earthy truffle notes, oakiness and a warm nutty finish. Vigía is named for the watchtowers in the Cuban city of Trinidad erected to observe the sugarcane fields.

RATING: 94

MADE BY: n/a
FACTORY LOCATION: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba
DIMENSIONS: 4 3/8" by 54 ring
PRICE: £20.90

15



Alec Bradley Sanctum Toro

The Alec Bradley Sanctum Toro is the brainchild of company executive vice president Ralph Montero, who carefully oversaw the project. The name Sanctum is simply intended to refer to the personal time devoted to the enjoyment of the cigar. However, the Sanctum blend moves away from the earthier cigars that Alec Bradley has traditionally released and aspires to be a more rounded

smoke. This was achieved by the combination of a Honduran Corojo wrapper, Costa Rican binder and a multination filler. All together, it amounts to a five-country blend of tobaccos that culminate beautifully in the Toro size, which starts mild, but intensifies to show a diverse but harmonious range of flavors from white pepper and cinnamon to vanilla bean and almond paste.

RATING: 93

MADE BY: Tabacos de Oriente
FACTORY LOCATION: Honduras
WRAPPER: Honduras
BINDER: Costa Rica
FILLER: Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring
PRICE: \$7.75

16



Avo Syncro Nicaragua Toro

There are a lot of "firsts" for the Avo Syncro Nicaragua brand. It's the first regular-production Avo to be box pressed. It's the first regular-production box-pressed cigar to ever come out of Davidoff of Geneva's factory in the Dominican Republic. And, as is indicated in the name, it's also the first Avo to use Nicaraguan tobacco. The name is also meant to suggest synchronization

between the different tobaccos in the blend, which include Nicaraguan tobacco from Ometepe and Dominican tobacco types such as Piloto Cubano, San Vicente and a hybrid tobacco spawn from Piloto and Olor. The Toro's blocky dimensions and smart blending allow each tobacco to express itself, showing notes of leather, minerals and a dried apricot sweetness.

RATING: 93

MADE BY: Cigars Davidoff
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep., Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 54 ring
PRICE: \$9.90



RAISED IN SCOTLAND
**ROUSED BY THE
CARIBBEAN**

Glenfiddich 21 Year Old Rum Cask Finish

*After patiently raising our whisky for 21 years, we add a sublime finishing touch.
By finishing our malt whisky in Caribbean rum casks, we rouse our exceptional
Scotch whisky with extra rich, sweet and exotic flavours.*

FAMILY RUN SINCE 1887





La Mission du L'Atelier 1959

If Bordeaux comes to mind (think Chateau La Mission Haute-Brion), it's not a mistake. Francophile Pete Johnson of Tatuaje fame has taken his love of French wines and projected it on to this Mission du L'Atelier project. It's another variation (or "label" in wine parlance) of his original L'Atelier line, which is the collaborative effort of Johnson, his brother K.C., Dan Welsh and Sean Johnson.

La Mission distinguishes itself by its striking appearance: dramatic box-pressing, pigtail caps and a dark Mexican San Andrés wrapper. It also features Sancti Spiritus tobacco in the filler, an uncommon varietal grown in Nicaragua by the Garcia family. The blend is impressive, especially in the 1959 size, which shows a savory, leathery note, sweet baking spices and a touch of anise.

17

RATING: 93

MADE BY: My Father Cigars S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 4 3/4" by 52 ring
PRICE: \$8.00



Heritage by Dunhill Robusto

The storied Dunhill line originated as a Cuban brand, but is now owned by corporate concern British American Tobacco (BAT) and both made and distributed by General Cigar Co. Since General took on distribution, the Dunhill brand has had a few iterations, but none have been as impressive as the Heritage by Dunhill. The first thing one notices is the band. Dunhill has brought back its original

"white rose" bands and put them around these dark smokes. Although the band is a bit larger than the original, the Heritage line mixes the past with the present by resurrecting its vintage labels but giving the cigar a strong, modern blend. The box-pressed Robusto is covered in an Ecuadoran Habano wrapper, the rest of this cigar is full of meaty, peppery Nicaraguan and Honduran tobacco.

18

RATING: 93

MADE BY: Scandinavian Tobacco Group, Danlí
FACTORY LOCATION: Honduras
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua, Honduras
DIMENSIONS: 5" by 50 ring
PRICE: \$10.15



The King Is Dead The Last Payday

These cigars may be whimsically named and the packaging might look a bit avant garde, but The King is Dead is an interesting brand that uses uncommon tobaccos—and uncommon imagery. The band features a surreal imprint of a split throne. If you look passed the artsiness, you'll find that brand owner Robert Caldwell has sourced some rare tobaccos in the blend, specifically a type called HVA 20/20. It's a

Cuban hybrid developed by Dominican grower Leo Reyes and is rarely used. The wrapper is grown from another Dominican varietal called Negrito. When blended and rolled into a torpedo, one gets The Last Payday. The name is unorthodox and perhaps doesn't evoke visions of the everyday smoking experience, but this cigar combines the nuance of maple sweetness and the tonality of earth in unexpected ways.

19

RATING: 93

MADE BY: Caldwell Cigar Factory
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Dom. Rep.
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring
PRICE: \$10.50

BEST CIGAR BUYS OF THE YEAR

We live in expensive times. Even a cup of coffee can cost you \$6. Fortunately, you can get a great cigar for about the same price. Just take a look at our list of all the cigars from 2015 that scored 88 points or higher and cost \$6 or less (before taxes). You'll find a diverse range of interesting and attractive smokes, from the diminutive Nub Cameroon 358, which also placed number 23 on our list of Top 25 Cigars of 2015, to larger, big ring gauge cigars such as New World Virrey—at 6 inches by 58 ring (\$6)—a real bang for your buck. This year, three Cuban cigars also made economy class, a rare occurrence in our budget-friendly findings. In total there are 32 cigars to choose from; all of them prime cuts for the cost-conscious connoisseur. —David Clough

91 POINTS

7-20-4 Hustler Series Dog Walker
Honduras • 4 1/4" by 40 ring • \$6.00

Nub Cameroon 358
Nicaragua • 3 3/4" by 58 ring • \$5.47

90 POINTS

Joya Red Robusto
Nicaragua • 5 1/4" by 50 ring • \$5.75

Punch Signature Rothschild
Honduras • 4 1/2" by 50 ring • \$5.39

Sublimes Robusto
Nicaragua • 4 3/4" by 50 ring • \$5.90

Vegueros Entretiempo
Cuba • 4 3/8" by 52 ring • 5.10 Euro (Italy)

Vegueros Mañanita
Cuba • 4" by 46 ring • 3.60 Euro (Italy)

89 POINTS

A. Flores 1975 Gran Reserva Half Corona
Dom. Rep. • 3 1/2" by 46 ring • \$5.09

A. Flores 1975 Gran Reserva Sun Grown Half Corona
Dom. Rep. • 3 1/2" by 46 ring • \$5.00

Arturo Fuente Petit Corona Maduro
Dom. Rep. • 5" by 38 ring • \$5.25

Casa Magna Colorado Pikito
Nicaragua • 4 3/4" by 42 ring • \$5.15

H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon Petit Corona
Dom. Rep. • 5" by 40 ring • \$5.50

New World Connecticut Corona Gorda
Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 46 ring • \$5.50

New World Virrey
Nicaragua • 6" by 58 ring • \$6.00

Padrón 2000 Maduro
Nicaragua • 5" by 50 ring • \$5.20

Punch Pita EMS
Honduras • 6 1/8" by 50 ring • \$5.99

Romeo y Julieta Coronitas en Cedro
Cuba • 5 1/8" by 40 ring • 3.70 Sw. Fr.

Saint Luis Rey Belicoso
Honduras • 6 1/8" by 52 ring • \$5.35

Tatuaje Tattoo Caballero
Nicaragua • 5" by 50 ring • \$5.00

Tierra Volcán Volcanito
Nicaragua • 4 1/2" by 26 ring • \$2.90

VegaFina Nicaragua Corona
Dom. Rep. • 5 3/4" by 42 ring • \$5.50

88 POINTS

Alec Bradley Black Market Punk
Honduras • 4 1/4" by 42 ring • \$5.65

Asylum Premium 50x6
Nicaragua • 6" by 50 ring • \$5.60

CAO Colombia Tinto
Nicaragua • 5" by 50 ring • \$6.00

Debonaire First Degree
Dom. Rep. • 4" by 44 ring • \$6.00

Joya de Nicaragua Antaño 1970 Machito
Nicaragua • 4 3/4" by 42 ring • \$5.40

New World Almirante
Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 55 ring • \$6.00

New World Connecticut Belicoso
Nicaragua • 6" by 54 ring • \$5.90

New World Navagante
Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 55 ring • \$5.94

Placeres Reserva Marevas
Honduras • 5" by 42 ring • \$5.90

Project 805 Petite Corona
Dom. Rep. • 4" by 40 ring • \$5.00

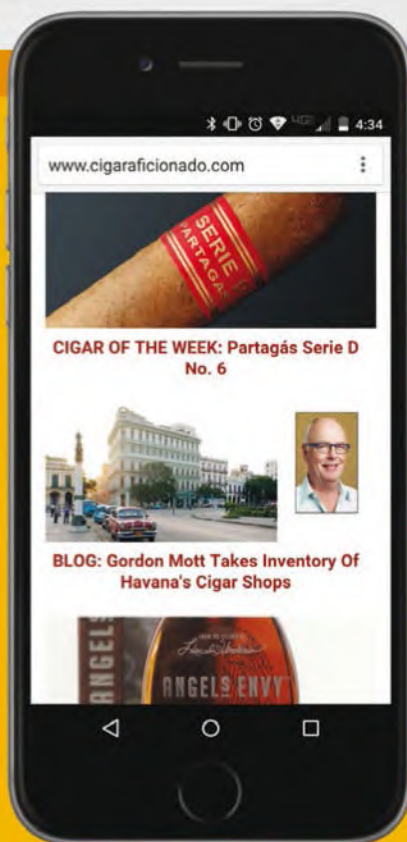
Tatuaje Havana VI Verocú No. 5
Nicaragua • 4" by 40 ring • \$4.25

Below, from left to right, Casa Magna Colorado, New World Virrey and Padrón 2000 Maduro. Right, a box of Vegueros Entretiempo, Asylum Premium and H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon.



SMOKER FRIENDLY

Over 17,000 Ratings. How-To Videos. Cuba News.



THE NEWLY REDESIGNED CIGARAFICIONADO.COM IS A CIGAR LOVER'S DREAM:

Expanded search to find a great-tasting cigar.

More videos to improve your cigar-smoking experience.

And a Cuba channel with travel tips and cigar ratings.

Visit the **NEW** CigarAficionado.com



20

Espada by Montecristo Quillon

Unlike most non-Cuban Montecristos, the Espada by Montecristo brand is made in Nicaragua at Plasencia Cigars and is a collaboration between Plasencia and the Altadis blending team, known as the Grupo de Maestros. They're made entirely from Nicaraguan tobacco and come packaged in striking suede boxes of 10. Each cigar is adorned with three bands: a primary

Montecristo band, a foot band that reads "Espada" and a certificate wrapped around the middle. Spanish for "sword," Espada is also a reference to the rapiers found on the iconic Montecristo logo, which was reinterpreted for this line. The large Quillon is an exceptional smoke offering the spice of a gingersnap with touches of cinnamon that build to a sweet, spicy finish.

RATING: 92

MADE BY: Plasencia Cigars S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 7" by 56 ring
PRICE: \$12.70



21

Nat Sherman Timeless Collection Nicaragua 652T

Nat Sherman Tobacconist has been synonymous with the New York City smoking scene for more than eight decades, however there were years when Nat Sherman as a company struggled to produce a national brand. That time has changed. Through cooperation between the Sherman family and Michael Herklots, Nat Sherman is now a national player in the premium cigar business,

most notably with its Timeless Collection. There are two versions—one made in the Dominican Republic, and the Nicaraguan version here. The Nat Sherman Timeless Collection Nicaragua 652T, a handsomely box-pressed torpedo, captured the No. 21 spot on our list. These figurados are a medium- to full-bodied affair offering a rich range of molasses, oak and semisweet chocolate.

RATING: 92

MADE BY: Plasencia Cigars S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring
PRICE: \$8.50



22

Padilla Miami 8&11 Torpedo

First it was made in Miami, then it wasn't then it was again. Today, the Padilla Miami 8&11 is rolled in Miami's El Titan de Bronze factory on the corner of 8th Street and 11th Avenue in Little Havana. Brand owner Ernesto Padilla has always considered his cigars to be boutique brands and the Padilla Miami 8&11 stays true to this sentiment. If there is a Miami-style of

cigar, it's most apparent in the construction, as many rollers in Little Havana were trained in Cuban factories before emigrating to Florida. These Torpedos are impeccably assembled and benefit from the slow pace of a small, boutique-style rolling gallery. We found them to have a light cocoa quality along with notes of candied fruit and oak.

RATING: 92

MADE BY: El Titan de Bronze
FACTORY LOCATION: U.S.A.
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6 1/2" by 54 ring
PRICE: \$14.30



NUb Cameroon 358

Just the sweet spot. That was the tagline for the NUb concept when it first came out. It claimed that the cigar needed no time to warm up or develop, but was able to localize the most flavorful portion of a cigar and keep the smoker there from first draw to the last. Whether or not this concept is true is a matter of opinion, but we found the NUb Cameroon to burn cool, smoke well

and deliver loads of nutty, earthy flavor. NUBs have successfully infiltrated the culture of premium cigars. Since the brand's debut in 2008, anytime a cigar is short and fat, smokers will casually refer to it as a nub, no matter the brand. They are made by Oliva Cigar Co. but marketed under Studio Tobac, which is the more creative, experimental arm of Oliva.

23

RATING: 92

MADE BY: Tabacalera Oliva S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Cameroon
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 3 3/4" by 58 ring
PRICE: \$5.47



La Flor Dominicana Coronado Corona Especial

Critical and commercial success are not always one and the same. The La Flor Dominicana Coronado is a perfect example. Previously called Coronado by La Flor, the cigar rated very well in CIGAR AFICIONADO when it debuted in 2006, and has even appeared on our Top 25 list. For some reason, Coronado didn't exactly soar commercially and interest for the cigar inexplicably

waned, so Litto Gomez only produced it sporadically. This year, he decided to bring this great blend back. The brand has a new name, a new box and new bands, but the blend has not changed, and we're glad it hasn't. Each puff of this corona gorda exhibits a soft and mellow nuttiness that develops to an elegant combination of nutmeg and graham cracker with a subtle, spicy undertone.

24

RATING: 92

MADE BY: Tabacalera La Flor S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS: 5 7/8" by 47 ring
PRICE: \$8.80



Sublimes Robusto Extra

Sublimes began in 2004 as a local, Miami-made cigar, but didn't become a national brand until 2011. Once the cigar began to get some exposure, demand made Sublimes too large for Miami and the operation moved to the A.J. Fernandez factory in Nicaragua. The blend is a combination of Ecuador Habano wrapper, a Corojo-seed binder and Criollo filler. The label on the cigar

reads "Jaromirski & Co." which is a reference to brand owner Thomas Jaromirski. Though the cigar is made in a large factory, Sublimes are still treated as a boutique brand. According to Jaromirski, only 90,000 are produced a year. The Robusto Extra was impressive in its ability to show both a strong and sweet quality with earthy carob chip notes balanced by a touch of toffee.

25

RATING: 92

MADE BY: Tabacalera A.J. Fernandez
 Cigars de Nicaragua S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Honduras
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/4" by 52 ring
PRICE: \$6.90

WITH OUR FINEST QUALITY ESTATE-GROWN
TOBACCOS AND LEGENDARY HABANA CRIOLLO
WRAPPER, THE ROBERTO DURAN SIGNATURE
LINE IS EXPERTLY HAND-ROLLED
TO CREATE A HIGHLY SOUGHT-AFTER, RICH,
PROGRESSIVELY FLAVORED SMOKE.

THESE



ARE THE CIGARS THAT GET SMUGGLED INTO CUBA




duran
CIGARS

WE GROW IT. WE ROLL IT. YOU SMOKE IT.

ROBERTODURANCIGARS.COM

NEW RELEASES OF 2015

Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado This offshoot of the company's original Nica Puro showcases an all-Nicaraguan blend draped by a lovely reddish-brown wrapper.

A. Turrent Casa Turrent 1901 First released in Canada and Europe, this new line from the Turrents is made with 80 percent Mexican tobacco and now available in the United States.

Camacho American Barrel-Aged Covered by a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper, this regular-production cigar showcases Corojo leaf from Honduras that was aged in Kentucky Bourbon barrels for five months.

Davidoff Escuro The company looked to Brazil for this new three-size line, which features the Cuban-seed varietal called Cubra that's grown in the South American country.

Don Carlos Personal Reserve To honor company patriarch Carlos Fuente Sr.'s 80th birthday, the Fuentes released his private blend in a Robusto.

Eiroa First 20 Years Created by Julio Eiroa to celebrate his son Christian's 20 years in the industry, this Honduran puro features a Cuban-seed Criollo varietal that he says has not been used in 50 years.

El Centurion H-2K-CT An offshoot of My Father Cigars' original El Centurion, this line sports a Cuban-seed wrapper grown in the Connecticut River Valley.

Enclave From A.J. Fernandez, the creator of New World and San Lotano, this brand is rolled with an uncut foot and sports a three-country blend that includes an Ecuadoran Habano wrapper.

E.P. Carrillo Selección Oscuro Available in six sizes, this cigar is dressed in a dark wrapper hailing from Mexico's San Andrés Valley.

Flores y Rodriguez Connecticut Valley Reserve Maduro This collaboration between PDR Cigars owner Abe Flores and his factory partner Juan Rodriguez features a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper and comes in four sizes.

Freyja Named after the Norse goddess of love, war and fertility, this cigar is composed of a three-country blend covered by a Dominican Criollo '98 wrapper.

Henry Clay Tattoo A joint project between Altadis U.S.A. and Tatuaje brand owner Pete Johnson, this box-pressed cigar uses a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper from a 2010 harvest.

H. Upmann Magnum 56 Edición Limitada 2015 This 56 ring gauge smoke is the thickest H. Upmann that Cuba has ever produced.

Joya de Nicaragua Cuatro Cinco Reserva Especial While the 2013 version of this line was only a limited release, the sequel is a full-fledged line rolled with filler aged in oak.



Kristoff Cameroon A toothy wrapper from Cameroon, once an industry mainstay but rarely seen today, covers a blend of Nicaraguan and Dominican tobaccos.

La Bohème Encantador The second act for last year's operatically themed La Bohème. The new line is box pressed with a darker, higher-priming Ecuadoran wrapper than its predecessor. Only 400,000 cigars were produced.

La Flor Dominicana La Nox Blended by La Flor owner Litto Gomez's son Anthony, this single-size brand sports a dark, oily Brazilian Cubra wrapper and comes packed in black circular boxes.

La Palina Red Label Collection The newest addition to La Palina's portfolio comes in four sizes and is draped in a toothy, Cuban-seed wrapper grown in Ecuador.

Macanudo Estate Reserve 2015 This small-production cigar uses a crop of Jamaican tobacco called Silver Tongue that was grown especially for the release.

Matilde Oscuro Conceived by industry veteran José Seijas, this cigar is dressed in a dark wrapper from San Andrés, Mexico, Sumatra binder and ligero from Pennsylvania for strength.

Montecristo 80th Anniversary Altadis U.S.A. created this limited, box-pressed belicoso to commemorate 80 years of its iconic brand. A hybrid tobacco called Pilotico was grown in Navarete, in the Dominican Republic, exclusively for the release.

Murcielago Brand owner Erik Espinosa revived this once-dormant brand by faithfully recreating the original blend, which is a Mexican San Andrés wrapper covering all-Nicaraguan binder and filler.

Nat Sherman 85th Anniversary Rolled at the Quesada Cigars factory in the Dominican Republic, this cigar celebrates Nat Sherman's 85th year in business and the filler is said to be about 50 percent ligero.

Padilla Criollo-98 Composed of a Honduran Criollo '98 wrapper and Nicaraguan binders and filler, each of the three vitolas retail for less than \$7.

Padrón Dámaso The first cigar made with a Connecticut-seed wrapper from Padrón uses a leaf from Ecuador. It's also a round cigar, another first for the heralded company.

Partagás Maduro No. 1 The first maduro in this Cuban brand's long history and one of the few Cuban cigars to officially receive the maduro designation.

Ramon Allones Club Allones Edición Limitada 2015 This cigar marks only the second time a Ramon Allones has been chosen for Cuba's famous Edición Limitada program.

Quesada Reserva Privada Conceived around a bumper crop of Dominican San Vicente tobacco harvested long ago, the blend is an Ecuadoran Connecticut-seed wrapper with binder and filler tobacco from the 1997 San Vicente harvest, plus a bit of Pennsylvania ligero.

San Cristobal Ovation Ashton Distributors, which owns the San Cristobal name, once again tapped the Garcia family to create the brand's first limited-edition offshoot, which features binders and filler tobaccos from the Garcia's Nicaraguan farms.

Tabaquero Hamlet Paredes Blended by former Habanos S.A. ambassador Hamlet Paredes for Rocky Patel, the cigar is composed of Mexican San Andrés wrapper, filler from Nicaragua and Brazilian Mata Fina with San Andrés binders.

Ted's Farris While Ted's Cigars is best known for its flavored cigars, the company has entered the premium sector with a three-size line that's rolled in the Dominican Republic.

The Calemoch 25 Available in only one size, a portion of the tobaccos used in the blend have been cured not with traditional hardwood fires, but peat imported from Scotland.

Undercrown Shade Drew Estate master blender Willy Herrera created this lighter version, both in color and body, of the company's popular Undercrown line, which debuted four years ago.

Untamed Xtreme Ligero from Pennsylvania and Nicaragua make this line extension an amped up version of last year's Xtreme from La Aurora.

Tatuaje Havana VI Verocú Formerly a limited cigar from Tatuaje, this brand, which is a more powerful version of the company's Havana VI line, is now a regular production and available in six sizes.

Villiger San'Doro Colorado An homage to the discovery of tobacco, this three-size line showcases an Ecuadoran Habano wrapper and also comes in a milder version.

— Andrew Nagy

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY. BULLEIT 10 Year Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, 45-6% Alc/Vol. ©2015 Bulleit Distilling Company, Lawrenceburg, KY.



"Time has shaped my character... and my bourbon's."

Tom Bulleit

BULLEIT
BOURBON
10
AGED 10 YEARS



ALEC BRADLEY

It's not about the maker's history,
it's about making history.



Prensado | **Rated 96**



Tempus Natural | **Rated 94**



Mundial | **Rated 92**



Raices Cubanas | **Rated 92**



Sanctum | **Rated 91**

A man with glasses, wearing a grey pinstripe suit, a dark tie, and a white shirt, is leaning against a light-colored stone wall. He is holding a small object in his hands. The background is a textured stone wall.

Alan Rubin
First Generation Cigar Maker

ALECBRADLEY.COM

LIVE TRUE



1 MONTH IN A

“HOMELAND” STAR
DAMIAN LEWIS RETURNS
TO SHOWTIME WITH
“BILLIONS,” PLAYING A
HEDGE-FUND TITAN USING
ALL OF HIS POWER TO
STAY AHEAD OF THE LAW

BY MARSHALL FINE
PORTRAITS BY DAVID YELLEN

STYLING BY FREDDIE LEIBA
GROOMING BY MELISSA DEZARATE
SUIT AND TIE: PAUL SMITH / SHIRT: GIORGIO ARMANI / SHOES: A.TESTONI

HEADS TURN AS DAMIAN LEWIS STRIDES into a Le Pain Quotidien franchise in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. Lewis, in sunglasses, walks the length of the restaurant unmolested to a table in the rear. It's mid-afternoon and the lunchtime crowd has thinned on this summery late-October day. Still, it seems an unlikely place to meet one of the hottest actors in television. Asked how he happened to choose this particular spot to meet, Lewis, sunglasses now off, smiles quizzically and says, "I thought you chose it."

Tall and surprisingly rangy, Lewis has a slow grin, and blue eyes that can look both warm and icily transparent in the right light. His coppery hair actually appears to have a slightly chestnut cast this particular day. Normally Lewis is the most recognizable red-haired actor working today.

The 44-year-old Lewis has been living in New York for a couple of months, shooting his new series, "Billions," which has its debut on Showtime in January. "We've broken the back on it—we've done more than half of them," he says, ordering a salad and settling in for a chat.

In the series, Lewis plays Bobby "Axe" Axelrod, a hedge-fund king who finds himself the target of an investigation by zealous U.S. Attorney Chuck Rhoades, played by Paul Giamatti. Axelrod is a hard-charger, a blue-collar guy who rose from the mean streets of Yonkers to the top of the financial industry, conquering the hedge-fund world—and then rebuilding his company out of the ashes of 9/11. In an era when calling someone a member of "the 1 percent" can be considered an insult, Axelrod is a man of the people: the popular rich guy who still eats at the same corner pizza joint that he frequented when he was a kid.

Axelrod is a billionaire with both killer charm and a killer instinct. How many rules is he willing to break to surf the financial wave nimbly enough to enrich himself? Quite a few, as it happens—and in surprisingly elaborate ways. The series focuses on whether he covered his tracks well enough to keep the dogged U.S. Attorney Rhoades off his trail.

The charming criminal with a human side: You may hate the things he does but you wind up sucked into his personal saga if he's charismatic enough. In that sense, Bobby Axelrod lands right in the sweet spot for the

kind of characters who have seduced and enthralled pay-cable audiences, from Tony Soprano to Walter White to Don Draper.

"These characters are fascinating because of their passion and desperation," Lewis says. "If you show anybody trying to achieve a goal, then anything they do seems to be forgivable, if they're caught up in an obsession."

"Bobby is a character who plays right to the strength of what is best about television right now. I feel very fortunate, really, to be working in this particular realm at this particular moment. It's my great fortune that I came of age at a time when this new form of television was developing."

"A major factor is that it's become increasingly difficult to make movies. So the sophisticated, interesting stories are being told on TV, where it's easier to get them made. People realized they could write scripts that were more complicated, that you can tell over a 12-hour period. And people take these 12-hour movies and binge-watch them. David Simon (creator of "The Wire") referred to this form as novelized drama. Watching one of these long-form dramas does feel more like getting involved with a novel."

One of the most popular novelized dramas of all time is "Homeland," which told the story of Nicholas Brody, the iconic character Lewis portrayed in the first three seasons of the much-honored Showtime series. Brody was a Marine sniper captured and held for eight years by al-Qaeda, freed by American forces and returned to America as a hero. But a bipolar CIA operative named Carrie Mathison (played by Claire Danes) became convinced that Brody was actually a double agent, programmed to commit an act of terror on American soil. Which (spoiler alert), in fact,

SUIT: PAUL SMITH / SHIRT AND TIE: GIORGIO ARMANI / SHOES: A. TESTONI





EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT OF THE VALLEY



Introducing the **NEW** Montecristo White Series Vintage Connecticut

Its vintage 2008 Connecticut Shade Wrapper, nurtured on Montecristo's company farms in the Connecticut River Valley USA, is prized for its silky texture and delicate taste.

**Creamy smoothness, rich aroma
and complex flavor sensations**



MONTECRISTO

WHITE SERIES

Vintage
CONNECTICUT™

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Cigar Smoking Can Cause Lung
Cancer And Heart Disease.



Facebook.com/TheCigarLife



Twitter.com/TheCigarLife

Join www.montecristosocialclub.com



Lewis played the complex and conflicted Nicholas Brody in three intense seasons of "Homeland."



was the case—right up until Brody had a change of heart, just as he was about to trigger a suicide bomb in a room with the vice president of the United States and most of the cabinet.

"What was interesting about Brody was that, really, he didn't know who he was," Lewis says. "He's a soldier, he's a prisoner, he's a terrorist, he's a patriot. He came back to commit an act of terror—and wound up going back to Iran in service to his country."

The character fascinated the viewing public, in part because of the series' breakneck pace, hairpin plotting and cliff-hanger sensibility, in part because of Lewis' composed, mysterious performance as a killing machine who is trying to present the picture of a loving family man. In

Lewis' performance, Brody became a character who seemed emotionally transparent even as he kept the viewer guessing about what he was thinking at any given moment.

"Damian is an incredibly deft actor who makes really daring, surprising choices," Danes says. "It was endlessly fun to explore the duplicity inherent in the Brody/Carrie dynamic. He's just so smart and charismatic, you never could be sure what machinations were ticking behind the facade. But of all of the cat-and-mouse business, he was very clear about what the rules of the game were in the actual act of playing the scene. We could afford to delve into the darkness and dishonesty in the land of make believe, because we were so open and direct with each other as actors.



To create something new, we looked to our past.
Introducing Padrón Dámaso, a mild to medium flavor profile
crafted over five generations.

DÁMASO GAVE US LIFE, FAMILY AND OUR START IN THIS INDUSTRY.

Dámaso was the first Padrón to arrive in Cuba in the late 1800's from the Canary Islands. Commonly referred to as "Isleños", they tended to work in farming and in this tradition our grandfather rented a small piece of land in Pinar del Rio and started growing tobacco. Honest, decent

and hard working, Dámaso taught us to honor our word and be humble. These are lessons that have stayed with us throughout our lives and we have tried to pass them on to our children. It means a lot to us that we are making this cigar in his honor. www.padron.com

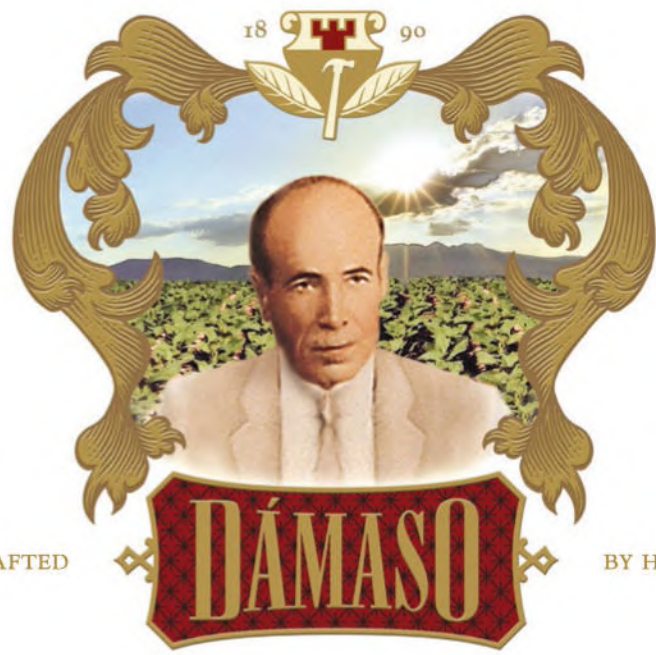
José O. Padrón
1964

FOR THOSE WHO SEEK THE QUALITY, COMPLEXITY AND CONSISTENCY OF PADRÓN.
NO. 17: 54 X 7 | NO. 15: 52 X 6 | NO. 12: 50 X 5 | NO. 8: 46 X 5 1/2





Padrón



CRAFTED

BY HAND





To have that communication and consideration with a partner—which translates into trust—is a beautiful and rare thing.”

Though he had a busy acting career prior to “Homeland,” Lewis’ star took off almost from the first episode. He won both the Golden Globe and the Emmy for his performance as the star of a show that took the world by storm.

“Beyond our wildest imagining,” Lewis says succinctly. “We’d finished shooting most of them by the time the first one went on the air and we knew we had something unique. But we had no idea. The reaction was immediate—and stunning.

“The immediate effect was a more aggressive kind of fandom. I was used to being stopped in the street, but there was something a little more hysterical about those encounters after ‘Homeland.’ People will physically grab you and stand right on your toes, to get a camera next to your face.”

The show was a sensation, debated on talk radio and social media alike, with its nuanced view of both the war on terror and terrorism itself. Given the burgeoning real-life conflict in the Middle East after the intelligence failures before America’s disastrous invasion of Iraq, “Homeland” tapped straight into a vein of political paranoia, even as it unpacked personal dramas about Brody and Carrie, who wound up as lovers.

That romantic entanglement—spy and terrorist, patriot and traitor, professional deceiver and undercover killer—became one of the show’s most compelling elements, one that Lewis and Danes approached as a collaboration.

“Despite the Sturm und Drang of our relationship on-screen, Damian and I had a lovely, low-key rapport,” Danes says. “Most of the actors lived in the same apartment building during the first three seasons [the series was based in Charlotte, North Carolina] and we would often have dinner parties, game nights and, yes, even craft sessions. We were building and defining the show during those initial years, so we worked closely and carefully to find it together. He was a wonderful partner in that process.”

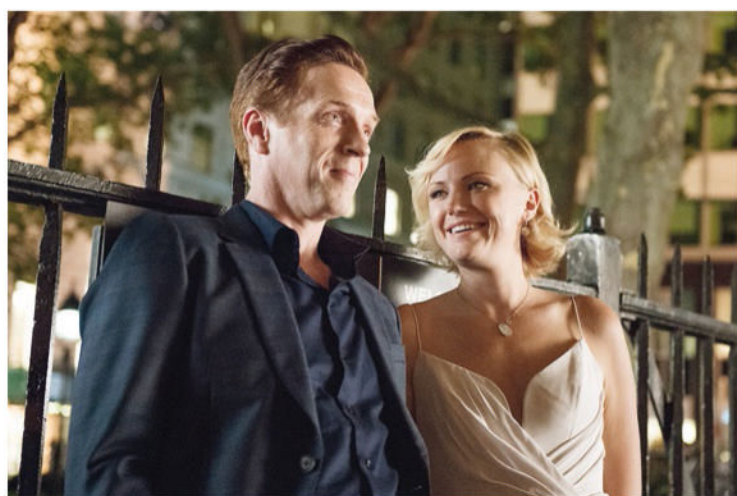
The show was an international sensation that counted among its admirers Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton. Lewis and his wife, actress Helen McCrory, were invited to a state dinner at the White House in 2012 in honor of British Prime Minister David Cameron, an evening Lewis describes as an almost out-of-body experience: seated next to billionaire Warren Buffett and across from President Obama, as the president started talking about the fact that “Homeland” was his favorite show.

“He was extremely charming and funny, talking about how much he enjoyed the series,” Lewis recalls. “I finally asked him, ‘When do you have time to watch TV?’ And he said, ‘Well, on Saturdays, when Michelle takes the girls to play tennis, I go into the Oval Office and watch some TV.’ That was such a great image to me: of POTUS, his feet up on the desk, kicking back to watch ‘Homeland.’”

Shortly afterward, while attending an event for the Clinton Foundation in London, Lewis found himself face to face in the receiving line with former President Bill Clinton. Clinton recognized him—and shortly after Lewis finished his trip through the line, he was approached by two large men in dark suits, who asked him to follow them and took him to an empty room elsewhere in the building.

“I thought I was going to be assassinated,” Lewis jokes.

Then a door opened and Clinton walked in. The former president



In “Billions,” Lewis squares off against Paul Giamatti (center) in a game of exceptionally big money. Above, with Malin Akerman.

spent the next 20 minutes offering Lewis a private assessment of how important he thought “Homeland” was in its portrayal of Islam. “It was fascinating,” Lewis says.

Clinton wasn’t the only one to make that observation: “I can’t tell you how often I get stopped by people, who appreciate my depiction of an observant Muslim,” Lewis says.

All good things must come to an end, however, and (spoiler alert) Nicholas Brody died in the final episode of the third season. (Lewis did, however, make a return of sorts as Brody in a drug-induced hallucination Carrie suffered during Season 4). According to Blank, Brody survived a season or two longer than he was originally supposed to.

“Originally he was supposed to die at the end of the first season,” says Showtime CEO and chairman Matt Blank. (“I thought it was the second,”

“I WAS USED TO BEING STOPPED IN THE STREET, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING MORE HYSTERICAL AFTER HOMELAND.”

says Lewis.) “But Damian was so great in the role and the character had so many possibilities that we just couldn’t do it. Obviously, his time on Earth was limited after that.”

By the third season, Brody’s death was inevitable. That didn’t make it any easier to accept for hard-core fans of the show: “I still get people coming up to me saying, ‘How could you kill Brody?’” Blank says.

“At the time Brody’s death came, he’d already had at least one stay of execution,” Lewis says. “He created problems from a storytelling point of view. When it came time for him to die, it felt like the right thing to do.”

The end was dramatic, and resonated with the actor. “Filming that scene,” he says, “with me simulating being hung by a crane in Rabat, Morocco, with 200 Moroccan extras screaming—that was pretty overwhelming, actually.”

“Homeland” made Lewis a star, but it was HBO’s 2001 miniseries “Band of Brothers” that launched him toward that orbit. Playing an American soldier who survives the air-drop behind enemy lines that accompanied the D-Day invasion in June 1944, Lewis found himself plucked from the ranks of actors earning a living in Great Britain and flown to Los Angeles for a meeting with the series’ producers: Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg.

“You have to understand that film and television never really figured



in my plans,” Lewis says. “Theater was my focus. Then I’m suddenly flown to Los Angeles, put up at this lovely hotel at the beach in Santa Monica—and then ushered into a meeting with Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. I mean, these men are iconic artists. But they both had such warmth and were so welcoming to me. And here I was, one step removed from the poor roving player.”

That miniseries required Lewis and his castmates to go through a basic training course, an accelerated two-week version of what real soldiers in World War II underwent, to pick up some of the skills their real-life counterparts had. Lewis had the added challenge of working his way up to a command position, just as his character, Richard Winters, who moved up from lieutenant to major through a series of field promotions during his year of combat.

“I had to go through the training but, by the end, I had to be leading the group,” he recalls. “It was physically very challenging. I led them in a



combat exercise: all of us against our handful of instructors.” The outcome of said exercises made Lewis grateful that he was only playing a World War II soldier rather than actually serving. “I got shot so many times—I was like a sieve.”

Despite the serious characters he has played, from Major Winters to Brody, Lewis has a playful and loose side. As some of his costars point out, Lewis is most happily himself when he gets in front of a camera. “There’s a lot going on beneath the surface, and yet outwardly he’s not doing anything,” says actress Sarah Shahi, who costarred with Lewis in the short-lived “Life,” on NBC. “He’s got a great stillness that’s very compelling.”

Says Giamatti: “He’s super-intelligent, super-engaged, really fun to play with.”

There are unexpected facets offscreen as well: “I think people would be surprised to know how much of a song-and-dance man Damian is,” Danes notes. “He took tap lessons one season—and got really friggin’ good. He’s got more than a little Fred Astaire in him.” Adds Shahi: “He does Elvis Presley, though his Elvis probably isn’t as good as he thinks it is.”

Whether it’s acting, dancing or even doing an impersonation of a rhinestone-studded superstar, Lewis is a born performer who calls his urge to perform “innate.” He grew up in wealthy surroundings. “Somewhere back there,” he says, “my family made its money during the Industrial Revolution.” His maternal grandfather was Lord Mayor of London and there are titles on his mother’s side of the family that go back several generations. “But they’re baronets,” he says, referring to what’s often a purchased title. “Not real nobility.”

Lewis attended Eton, Windsor’s so-called “School of Kings.” Almost



Lewis rose to prominence in the 2001 miniseries “Band of Brothers,” about a heroic group of soldiers fighting through Europe in World War II.

from the start, he says, he focused his extracurricular life on school theatrical productions, including an early predilection for Gilbert & Sullivan. At the age of 16, he put together his own theatrical troupe of pals, renting a space and equipment to put on productions of their own. When it came time for college, there was only one choice: acting school. His parents agreed and he was accepted at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where schoolmates included Dominic West, Joseph Fiennes and Ewan McGregor.

“My mother said, ‘If this is what you want to do, you should go. We think you have talent—and if we didn’t, we’d tell you.’ They were very supportive.”

Once out of drama school, he worked day jobs until he landed a position at the Royal Shakespeare Company, working his way through supporting roles as a member of the acting corps. He played Laertes to Ralph Fiennes’ “Hamlet,” a role that brought him to the attention of Steven Spielberg, who remembered him when casting began for “Band of Brothers.”

Lewis is thankful for Spielberg’s attention. “That show changed my career,” he says. “It changed my life.”

After the Emmy-winning “Band of Brothers,” the offers of work flooded him, from both British and American films and television. He played the central role of Soames Forsyte in a new version of “The Forsyte Saga” for British television, then hopped the pond for the well-regarded but little-seen “Life,” which lasted two seasons, one of them shortened by a writers’ strike.

He took roles in a big-budget Stephen King adaptation (*Dreamcatcher*, 2003) and a low-budget Sundance hit, *Keane* (2004), the latter performance bringing him to the attention of “Homeland” producers in search of someone to play Nicholas Brody.

One of the byproducts of Lewis’ time on “Homeland” was the chance to smoke cigars with the writers and producers on that show, as they would gather at the end of the day. Cigars, he finds, provide an opportunity for conversation with friends after dinner.

“With a glass of whiskey at the end of the evening, a cigar is just right,” Lewis explains. “I like milder, creamier Dominican cigars, although I’ve also enjoyed the occasional Cuban. You can buy them in London. I got a nice humidor full.” He says he gifted the humidor full of Havanas to

IRISH TRUE

GLASSES UP TO THE SONG AND THE STORM

TULLAMORE
DEW^{EST. 1829}
The Legendary
IRISH WHISKEY

TULLAMORE DEW IRISH WHISKEY®. 40% ALC./VOL. (80 PROOF)
©2015 IMPORTED BY WILLIAM GRANT & SONS, INC. NEW YORK, NY.

GLASSES UP TO RESPONSIBLE DRINKING.
FACEBOOK.COM/TULLAMOREDEW

Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa, “Homeland’s” executive producers.

“Billions” brings Lewis back to Showtime, which pleases Matt Blank. While network loyalty seems a product of a bygone era, Lewis couldn’t resist the chance to work with Showtime again.

“We were excited to be working with Damian,” Blank says. “It’s a relationship we want to nurture with this series. This is the kind of flawed character—like Dexter or Ray Donovan or Nicholas Brody—that has become a trademark for us.”

Axelrod has secrets, but so does Chuck Rhoades. There’s a difference in how the two characters deal with those secrets, explains the Emmy-winning Giamatti—but secrets themselves always make for compelling acting choices.

“There’s something interesting about a guy with a secret, and that’s particularly true about Damian,” says Giamatti, who appeared on the cover of *CIGAR AFICIONADO* in 2011.

Playing a character with that kind of duality—the public face, the private demons—is the kind of challenge actors relish. A character with a secret always harbors tension beneath the placid facade.

Notes Lewis, “Really, it’s like being a good poker player. When you’re in that situation, there are always two people you’re playing with—the other character in the scene and the audience. Then there’s the question of whether you allow the audience to enjoy knowing the secret as well—or whether you keep it to yourself. As an actor, you have to play everything with total sincerity. You play it from moment to moment, the way every good liar does.”

The battle between an über-rich hedge-fund manager and a government official seems plucked from current headlines. “The timing seems right for a story like this—the financial crisis is still on people’s mind and there’s great talk about income inequality,” Lewis says. “Here are these two men—Axe, with secrets that skirt the law, and Chuck Rhoades, with his personal secrets and issues with his father that drive him.”

With his light British accent, Lewis is part of a generation of actors from Great Britain (and Australia) who seem to have taken over American television, ranging from stars such as Simon Baker (“The Mentalist”) and Hugh Laurie (“House, M.D.”) to regularly-employed, familiar-looking supporting players like Lennie James (“The Walking Dead”) and Brian F. O’Byrne (“Aquarius”).

“I’m not sure what it is about the British playing American characters—maybe they bring a fresh take on it,” says Giamatti.

“When I’m shooting something where I’m playing an American, I’ll put

the accent on as soon as I get to the set and just never drop it,” Lewis says. “There are people on ‘Billions’ who have never heard my British accent.”

A far tougher demand than changing accents for this British star of an American TV series is time away from his two children, a daughter, 9, and son, 8. Lewis and wife McCrory (a semi-regular on the Showtime series “Penny Dreadful”) juggle their busy acting schedules so that when one is working, the other isn’t. The London-based Lewis was headquartered in North Carolina for much of his run on “Homeland” and has been filming “Billions” in New York.

“We have those discussions, that, in order for mom and dad to do their work, they have to be away sometimes, but there’s sadness, yes, at having to be away,” Lewis says. “When they were younger, they could all stay with me, but with school, that’s harder. They do get the chance to come over occasionally. And I fly to London every chance I have. But it’s always painful to be away from them.”

“I was really impressed by his devotion to his wife and kids,” Danes says. “He often spent his precious days off on a plane to join them in London for 48 hours, when they couldn’t be with him in Charlotte. He was there to be with his daughter at her birthday party, to take his son to his first day of school. He made real sacrifices to keep that part of his life—the life part of his life—intact and happy. And he adores Helen and is transparently proud of her power and depth as a person and actor. You gotta love a man who loves a strong woman.”

If anything, Lewis says, his life and marriage achieve a certain balance from the fact that both spouses are in-demand actors: “The easiest thing would be to have a wife that stayed at home,” he says.

“But my wife has had success and has a career that needs to be nurtured and encouraged. It’s a constant negotiation, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

The afternoon is winding down and Lewis has other appointments; days off on the demanding TV filming schedule are consumed by the part of life that’s put on hold the rest of the week. Time for a final question: If acting hadn’t worked, what would he be doing?

Without hesitation, he says, “Teaching. History.”

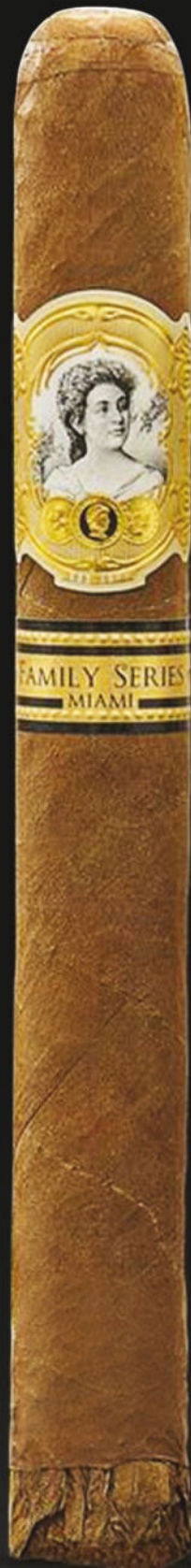
After the barest of pauses, he flashes that smile that can toggle from winning to sharklike with just a flicker of the eyes: “And drama. Of course.” ♦

Marshall Fine is a contributing editor who writes about film and entertainment. Follow him at [Facebook.com/hollywoodandfine](https://www.facebook.com/hollywoodandfine).



“THERE’S SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT A GUY WITH A SECRET, AND THAT’S PARTICULARLY TRUE ABOUT DAMIAN.”

—PAUL GIAMATTI



LAPALINA
EST. 1896

FAMILY SERIES
MIAMI
PASHA

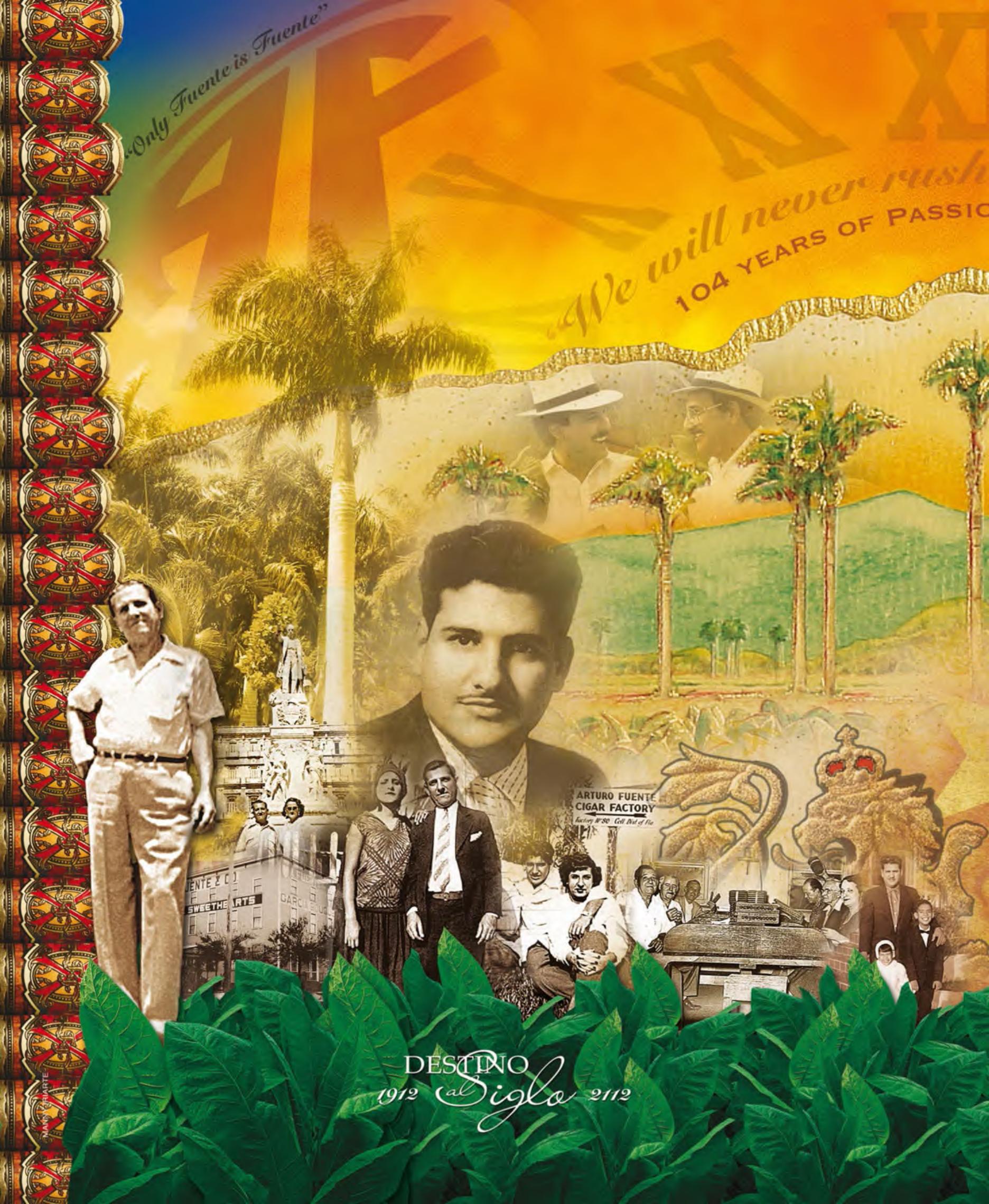
REMEMBER THIS

ARE YOU SURE
YOU DESERVE A CIGAR THIS GOOD?

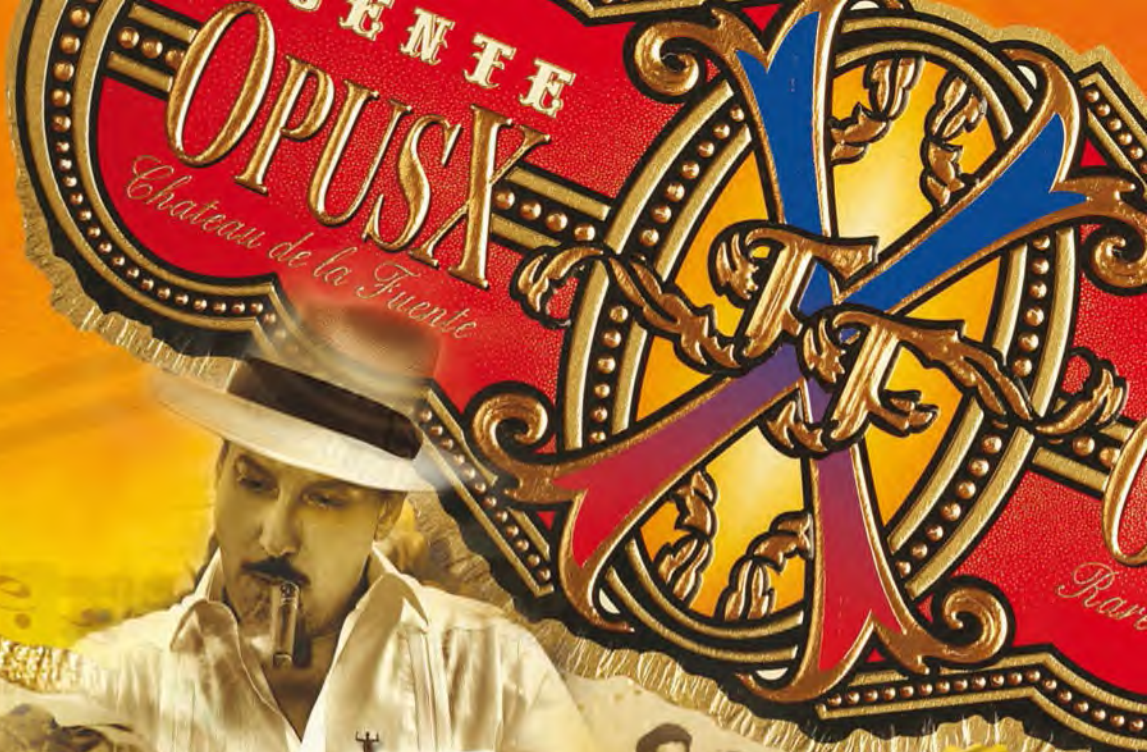
LAPALINACIGARS.COM

"Only Fuente is Fuente"

We will never rush
104 YEARS OF PASSION



DESTINO
1912 *al Siglo* 2112



the hands of time.
ON, FAMILY & FRIENDS

WE WILL NEVER RUSH THE HANDS OF TIME

ARTURO FUENTE

The Reigning Family of Premium Cigars
Since 1912

A SPECIAL REPORT



BY REP. PETER KING

Risks Facing AMERICA

The former Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee analyzes the present and future enemies facing the United States

A group of extremists who turned the quiet streets of Paris into a war zone. A nuclear state hoping to launch its missiles across the globe. A former empire expanding its territory. Cutting-edge technology aimed at countering our finest weapons. Terrorists who engineered the bloodiest attack in the history of the United States. • These are the myriad threats facing the United States today. The world has become an increasingly dangerous place. There are countries where the laws of dignity and democracy go unheeded, where barbaric acts are common and lives are lost every day. And as technology makes the world smaller, threats are

inching ever closer to our own front door. • Few have the knowledge, experience and foresight to look around the globe and recognize the true dangers we face. We at CIGAR AFICIONADO turned to Congressman Peter King of New York's Second District. He has chaired the Homeland Security Committee as well as serving as Chairman of its Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. He previously served on the Foreign Affairs Committee and is now a member of the Intelligence Committee. We asked Congressman King to map out the global threats that loom largest over America today.

GIVEN MY POSITION I have an insider's understanding about the threats that face America. As a Congressman—and as an American—I worry for our country's safety. However, true insight into our national security situation comes from a professional approach. Our intelligence agencies evaluate threats in terms of enemies' capabilities and intentions. For example, a country may maintain considerable military capacity, but not intend to use it against us, while a terror group with limited means might seek to attack us whenever possible. Viewed this way, I believe the most serious

threats we face include Iran, the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, Russia, North Korea and China. Our next president must prepare to confront these adversaries on his or her first day in office.

Iran

Religious extremists whose first act in power was to seize our embassy, with "Death to America" as their motto, were this spring within 90 days of a nuclear capability. This fall, they tested a long-range missile.

Few believe Tehran will abide by its accord with the Obama Administration, which went

into effect in October over the objections of Congress. Iran is already violating this deal, which by its terms allows the ayatollahs to obtain nuclear arms in the future, and is fueling a regional arms race.

Ayatollah Khamenei describes America as the "Great Satan." In September he spoke again of annihilating Israel.

Tehran's terror army, the Quds Force, and

A sea of potential threats. Clockwise, from top left: Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran, the forces of ISIS, a show of might in North Korea, Xi Jinping of China and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

THIS PAGE: JUSTIN LANE/CORBIS; OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BEHROUZ MEHRI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; AFP/GETTY IMAGES; FENG LI/GETTY IMAGES; SASHA MORDOVETS/GETTY IMAGES



proxy groups such as Hezbollah, will receive their share of the hundreds of billions of dollars given to Iran under the nuclear accord.

Iran's terror activities have reached our shores. The FBI and New York Police Department have detected Iran conducting surveillance of potential terror targets in our country, including subways and the heliport used by President Obama in Manhattan. In 2011 Iran sought to car bomb a Washington restaurant, a plot foiled only because Iran's hit man unknowingly discussed his plan with a U.S. informant.

Yet the nuclear accord actually removed sanctions against General Qasem Soleimani,

ISIS has filmed beheadings of U.S. civilians such as James Foley, and captured and repeatedly raped American Kayla Mueller before her death in February 2015. It killed U.S. Army Master Sergeant Joshua Wheeler in October.

ISIS has launched attacks in Libya, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and it destabilizes U.S. allies in Jordan and elsewhere. ISIS inspired or attempted attacks across the West—in Canada, Australia and Belgium and in Fort Worth, New York, Chattanooga and Boston, and elsewhere. It issued recent and specific threats against New York City and the White House, and regularly threatens to murder off-

levels than any terrorist threats since 9/11. More than 50 ISIS arrests have been made in 2015, including five ISIS operatives in the New York-New Jersey region prior to the Fourth of July.

Our best potential source of intelligence on the Islamic State inside the U.S. was the National Security Agency's metadata program, which flagged phone numbers in the United States in contact with known terrorists' numbers overseas. The program operated under Congressional and federal court monitoring, but was curtailed in response to ill-informed criticism after Edward Snowden and his coconspirator Glenn Greenwald disclosed the program.

Our ability to monitor ISIS is further limited by its operatives' use of commercially available encrypted communications, as they did in Paris. Law enforcement cannot access these discussions, even with a court order. Encrypted systems are sold to anyone, no questions asked. FBI Director James Comey and District Attorney Cyrus Vance of Manhattan have warned the business leaders responsible of the risks of terrorists using this technology.

The Islamic State has attempted or conducted several chemical weapons attacks in Syria, an indication that ISIS has a stockpile of poison gas. Potential Islamic State chemical attacks in the U.S. add a dangerous capability to their intent to kill Americans.

Every day this caliphate exists, it attracts and inspires radicals. The Obama Administration announced in October expanded operations against the Islamic State, but its efforts have been ineffective thus far.

The horrific attacks in Paris demonstrate just how deadly and effective ISIS can be. Yet the president refuses to acknowledge his failed policies and appears unwilling to change course. This is inviting disaster. The United States must commit to change policy and take whatever action is required to defeat ISIS. We cannot have the tragedy of Paris repeated on American streets.

Russia

Russia is still a significant power. Her proud leaders perceive Moscow as exploited and humiliated by a decadent West over the quarter-century since the Soviet Union fell. Now it is led by the cunning and tough former KGB First Chief Directorate Lieutenant Colonel Putin.

In 2014 Russia seized parts of southern and eastern Ukraine by force. In 2015 it began using combat forces in Syria and cemented alliances



Rep. Peter King, a 12-term member of Congress, once chaired the Homeland Security Committee.

who leads Iran's terror machine. He recently flew to Moscow to confer with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Unless Israel or a future U.S. president act to stop the ayatollahs, Iran's demonstrated ability and willingness to kill Americans will be augmented in the future by nuclear missiles.

Islamic State (ISIS)

Far from the "junior varsity" team dismissed by President Obama in 2014, ISIS now controls territory larger in size than Great Britain, stretching across Iraq and Syria. In October ISIS demonstrated the capacity to destroy an airliner full of 224 passengers over Egypt. And in November it murdered 130 civilians in a series of complex attacks in Paris, including Nohemi Gonzalez, an American college student studying abroad.

duty policemen and servicemembers and their families here at home.

Thousands of Europeans and hundreds of Americans have traveled abroad to fight for the Islamic State. They are returning, in numbers overwhelming the abilities of security services to track them.

This problem is compounded by the more than 800,000 refugees fleeing Syria headed to the West. Among them are Islamic State members, including some involved in the Paris attacks.

The Obama Administration proposed admitting 10,000 such refugees. It did so over bipartisan objections by Congress and governors, despite our government's utter inability to vet the possible terror ties of these refugees.

Meanwhile the number of radicalized Americans who are watching gruesome ISIS propaganda on the Internet is appalling.

ISIS threats to the Homeland are at higher



with Iraq and Iran. In so doing it established a line of Shia client states stretching from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Seas, a historic strategic coup. This year, Moscow may threaten one of our North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies in the Baltic States, with which we have treaty obligations, triggering a crisis in the Western alliance.

Do not underestimate Putin's Russia, and not just because it is the only country that can destroy the U.S. within minutes. Moscow's intelligence services have penetrated the West in the past, and its special forces are highly effective. Putin has demonstrated his will by assassinating political opponents at home and abroad, even using a radiological device to kill a defector in London in 2006.

U.S. forces in Europe have diminished to only 65,000—down from more than 400,000 during the Cold War. We now muster only two maneuver brigades in Europe, down from two full corps. We only sent token forces, of a company each, to reassure Eastern European allies facing the Red Army during recent crises.

The United States Army will soon be its smallest since before World War II. We need to rebuild it, and also to arm our embattled allies in Ukraine, to deter the Russians from further invasions in Europe.

Al-Qaeda

While I criticize President Obama's policies related to Iran, the Islamic State and Russia, his administration does deserve credit for its campaign against al-Qaeda.

The decisions to launch a Naval Special Warfare raid into Pakistan to kill Osama bin Laden, and to kill American terrorist Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen, made us much safer. Yet



The terrorist group ISIS attacked the city of Paris in November, killing 130 and injuring hundreds.

the al-Qaeda threat persists as long as 9/11 plotters such as Aiman al-Zawahiri remain alive.

Al-Qaeda has killed Americans for more than 22 years. Its first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 killed six, including my pregnant constituent Mrs. Monica Smith. Left unchecked in the intervening years, its 2001 attacks killed 2,977, including more than 150 friends, neighbors and constituents.

Between them, the FBI, NYPD and other agencies have stopped numerous attacks on the Homeland planned or inspired by al-Qaeda and its allies and affiliates since then, including the 2006 plot to destroy seven airliners en route to the U.S., and a 2009 plot to bomb the New York subway system. Attempted attacks on planes bound for Miami and Detroit, and a car bomb in Times Square, failed only at the last moment. Attacks in Little Rock, Fort Hood and Boston sadly succeeded, killing 18. Al-Qaeda-linked groups also attack Americans abroad, as in the 2012 attack in Benghazi.

Al-Qaeda remains fixated on multiple, simultaneous, mass-casualty attacks against symbolic targets in the West, often transportation targets. Regional affiliates such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and its bomb-maker Ibrahim al-Asiri, who implanted a bomb inside his own brother in an attempt to assassinate a Saudi security official, remain active.

Our best source of intelligence on al-Qaeda

was the enhanced interrogation program. The Central Intelligence Agency and U.S. military's rough questioning of al-Qaeda's senior members and those involved in 9/11 uncovered operatives in the U.S., ongoing plots, and the name of the courier who led to bin Laden. The program was discontinued in a fit of political correctness.

Al-Qaeda is not as dangerous as it was, due to the dogged efforts of our special operators and CIA. But it remains a threat, especially to destabilize an increasingly radicalized Pakistan. If al-Qaeda toppled the Islamabad government, it could seize that country's ill-secured nuclear arms and use them against us. We must keep our boot on their necks.

North Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is armed with nuclear weapons, and missiles that can hit the western U.S. A young man of 32, he designs elaborate ways to publicly execute advisers who displease him, reportedly feeding them to dogs or obliterating them with heavy weapons. In 2014 his nation led a cyberattack against Sony Pictures in response to a silly movie that offended him.

North Korea remains poised to invade South Korea on short notice. The 30,000 American troops there would help our ally repel any invasion. Despite a network of tunnels dug



ASHTON[®]

S Y M M E T R Y



FROM PATIENCE IS BORN PERFECTION

ashtoncigar.com



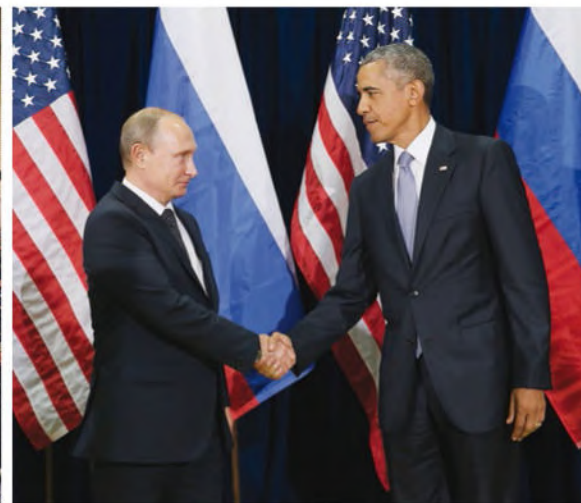

ASHTON[®]



ASHTON
SYMMETRY

ASHTON
SYMMETRY

ASHTON
SYMMETRY



President Barack Obama (top right, with Vladimir Putin of Russia) faces a host of threats, including an increasingly powerful Iran (top left) and North Korea's unpredictable Kim Jong-un (bottom right). Obama struck hard against al-Qaeda, ordering a 2011 raid that killed 9/11 leader Osama bin Laden.

under the Demilitarized Zone, the impoverished North lacks the resources to sustain a mechanized attack. But allied casualties would be severe. Seoul, a city of 10 million, lays within range of North Korea's dug-in artillery. And Kim would likely use weapons of mass destruction once his assault bogged down and battlefield failure threatened the survival of his regime.

The Obama administration is taking steps to counter the possibility that Kim may launch nuclear weapons at Alaska, Hawaii or California. Our next president must continue these efforts.

China

President Xi Jinping presides over a nationalistic country strengthened by an ancient culture, but also weakened by economic inequality, ethnic and religious tension, and official corruption.

Red China also maintains a small arsenal of nuclear missiles that can hit much of our country. But the threat from Beijing comes from its growing naval strength, and the

cyber-espionage efforts of its sophisticated signals intelligence service.

Communist China is launching a "blue water" navy to exercise power in the South China Sea. It is militarizing artificial reefs near island chains, the ownership of which it contests with Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. As a maritime trading nation, we maintain a strategic interest in the freedom of the seas.

In response, China claims unprecedented, extraordinarily large maritime exclusion and air defense identification zones. It is developing cutting-edge guided missile and torpedo technology to counter our Navy, especially our aircraft carriers.

Hackers from China's "Third Peoples Liberation Army" ransack the U.S. of our intellectual property and state secrets. They copy commercial and defense technology from American companies on a vast scale. And they steal personal health, financial and personnel records to help blackmail American officials in sensitive jobs.

Beijing is diligently preparing for a future naval conflict with the U.S., and its cyber prowess is such that it might disable our weapons and wreck our economy and infrastructure in case of war.

We must expand our shrunken Pacific Fleet. The U.S. Navy is the smallest it has been since 1916, down to 272 ships from 1,113 at the height of the Cold War, and 594 as recently as 1987. We must not tempt China with weakness, leading them to miscalculate and start a war, which could spin out of control and wreck the world economy.

• • •

These threats will sit in our next president's in-box on January 20, 2017. He or she must think hard now about how to counter Iran, the Islamic State, Russia, al-Qaeda, North Korea and China—and keep us safe. ❖

Rep. Peter King is a 12-term Republican Member of Congress from New York.

GURKHA

CELLAR RESERVE

JOURNEY TO PERFECTION



www.gurkhacigars.com

 Gurkha Cigars

 @gurkhacigars

 @gurkhacigars #gurkhanation



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A LIST OF
AUTHORIZED TOBACCONISTS IN YOUR AREA

Manufactured and Distributed by Oliva Cigar Co., Miami Lakes, FL 33014



nub
C I G A R

NUBCIGAR.COM



SMYLIE KAUFMAN

Today's Web.com players could be future PGA stars. Smylie Kaufman won the Web.com United Leasing Championship in May, then went on to his first PGA victory in October.

Emiliano Grillo, Justin Thomas and Peter Malnati are three recent PGA Tour winners who earned their stripes on the Web.com Tour.

Ticket To The Top

The Web.com Tour has become the preferred proving ground for making the PGA Tour
BY JEFF WILLIAMS

With the posse continually in the distance but always on their trail, Paul Newman as Butch Cassidy turns to Robert Redford as the Sundance Kid in their legendary 1969 buddy movie and says: "Who are those guys?"

An explosion of new talent catapulted onto the PGA Tour scene at the start of the wraparound season in October. Emiliano Grillo, Smylie Kaufman, Justin Thomas, Peter Malnati and Kevin Kisner won five of the first six events and became first-time winners on the Tour, confirming their presence in the top echelon of the game.

The established stars of the PGA Tour may have turned to each other like Butch and Sundance and asked the question: "Who are these guys?"

These young players aren't just anonymous pursuers of the game's riches and acclaim. They form a substantial posse of highly talented and competitive players whose names go up in lights when they win a PGA Tour title. But their bonafides as professionals increasingly are established in the modern womb of PGA Tour professionalism. Grillo, Kaufman, Thomas, Malnati and Kisner all made it to the PGA Tour after an apprenticeship on the Web.com Tour.

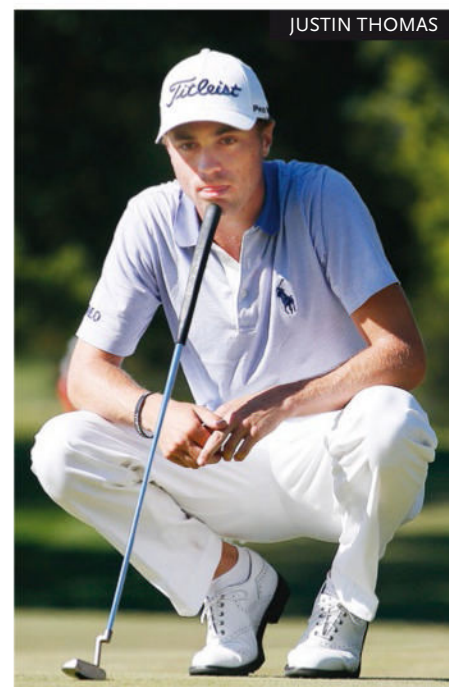
You could call the Web.com Tour (conceived, owned and operated by the PGA Tour) minor league if you want, and in its beginning it certainly was. It began in 1990, as the Ben Hogan Tour, and it has gone through several iterations over the years, as the Nike Tour, the Nationwide Tour, the Buy.com Tour and now the Web.com Tour. Today it is anything but minor, and is the established pathway to the PGA Tour.

Some of the biggest names on today's PGA Tour cut their chops on the ultracompetitive Web.com Tour, including major winners Keegan Bradley, Bubba Watson, Jason Dufner and Zach Johnson. Today the top 25 money winners during the Web.com regular season earn PGA Tour cards (up from five in 1990) and another 25 cards are issued at the conclusion of the four-event Web.com Finals where the top 75 money winners on the Web.com Tour play against those who have finished 126 to 200 on the PGA Tour rankings from the previous season.

The quality of play on the Web.com has seriously risen above that of Triple A ball. Jeff Sanders has watched it all happen. Sanders is the executive director of the Web.com Tour's Albertson's Boise Open, an original member of the Web.com Tour rota. He was off and on the PGA Tour in the mid-'80s before stepping outside the ropes to get into tournament administration. He's been intimately involved in the Web.com Tour since those early days.



EMILIANO GRILLO



JUSTIN THOMAS



PETER MALNATI



TOM LEHMAN



BUBBA WATSON



JASON DUFNER



ZACH JOHNSON

Four superstars who played on the Web.com Tour, or its predecessor the Ben Hogan Tour. Tom Lehman (top) won the 1996 Open Championship. Bubba Watson (above, left) is a two-time Masters winner. Jason Dufner (center) won the PGA in 2013. Zach Johnson has two majors to his credit.

“The tour started off as a place to learn how to play professional golf—learn how to travel, learn how to putt for money, learn how to work with a caddie. Definitely more of a developmental tour,” explains Sanders. “Now, in my opinion for 2016, this tour is an expansion of the PGA Tour. Boise, Idaho; Bakersfield, California; Tacoma, Washington; those were the kind of markets this tour went into in the beginning because of their size. Now we have this event in Portland, which at the beginning of the tour would have been considered too big a market. Now you have Jacksonville, Chicago—lots of bigger markets.”

It isn’t just the bigger markets that make the Web.com Tour what it is today. It’s the caliber of play, and what’s at stake. The Web.com Tour, for the last three seasons, has replaced the PGA Tour qualifying school as the direct path to the PGA Tour, and the players have reached a higher level of both accomplishment and expectation.

“The fear is gone. These guys come out now and they are ready to win,” says Sanders. “They follow guys on the Web.com Tour that have won, and they say I’ve played on the Web.com with these guys and I could

compete with them. When they see these guys graduate to the PGA Tour and see them win, they say when I get out there I’ll have a chance to win, too. Used to be when you came out years ago as a 22-, 23-, 24-year-old, there was a period of time where guys had to learn how to play the PGA Tour. They don’t really have to now. They come right out ready to go, ready to win. That’s the biggest single difference over the last 25 years.”

That’s exactly how Smylie Kaufman felt after he won the Web.com’s United Leasing Championship last May. As he held the trophy, he knew he had a strong toehold on getting his PGA Tour card for the 2015–16 season, and when he got out on the big tour, he could compete, and he could win.

“Absolutely I did,” says Kaufman just after winning the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open at Las Vegas last October. He shot a final round of 61, the second event on the PGA Tour’s wraparound season.

Kaufman’s story is not untypical of the rise of talented players through the Web.com Tour. The 23-year-old from Birmingham, Alabama was a good college player for Louisiana State, but he wasn’t making anyone forget Tiger Woods’ or Phil Mickelson’s college careers. When he went to the Web.com qualifying school in 2014, he only played well enough to get conditional status, finishing in a tie for 64th. He got into three events at the start of the season in South America and missed every cut. Then he got a sponsor’s exemption into the Louisiana Web.com event and finished fourth. That got him into the next event, where he finished fourth again. That got him into the United Leasing Championship where he won.

And those finishes pretty much assured that he would finish in the top 25 money winners during the regular season and earn his PGA Tour card.

The Web.com Tour remains a place where young players learn how to be a week-to-week professional even if their games are virtually equivalent to PGA Tour grade. And Kaufman is a poster boy for the Web.com’s apprentice program.

“The Web.com Tour for me was about playing a full schedule. I had never done that before in my life,” says Kaufman. “Just how you manage a seven-day week, how you manage your practice rounds and how you manage pro-ams, how you handle your body Thursday to Sunday, how you work out, when you work out. I wouldn’t have had a clue how to do any of that unless I was put in that situation. Figuring out what works best for me, that’s pretty much what the Web.com did for me.”

Bill Calfee has been president of the Web.com Tour since 1999, and has presided over its transformation. He was at the forefront of making the Web.com the official stepping-stone to the PGA Tour in 2013, something that took a great deal of cajoling from established

players who thought the old PGA Tour qualifying school was good enough.

“The concept was to start a small tour with the Ben Hogan company, 30 events in small markets with \$100,000 purses, five cards going to the PGA Tour at the end of the season,” says Calfee. “Really, it was to help guys develop their game, improve their game so they could get to PGA Tour quality and then get to the PGA Tour. It was developmental, clearly minor league in the early days—the competition and the markets we were playing in, the media footprint, no television, no charity component, none of that.

“You fast-forward to today and a lot has changed over the years. In the changes we’ve made and the structure we changed a couple of years ago, it is the path to the PGA Tour.

“And the major reason we changed the system, as I look at it, is that these guys aren’t developing their games, they aren’t minor league, although that’s an easy default position in that when you look at the PGA Tour then this must be minor league. I look at it as our form of expansion, PGA Tour II. These guys have the game. They are proving it every single year.”

Tom Lehman, now a Champions Tour player, was an off-and-on player on the PGA Tour in the 1980s, and the Ben Hogan Tour became his ski lift to the PGA Tour mountain. He was leading Hogan Tour money winner in 1991, gaining PGA Tour status, and among his PGA Tour wins was the 1996 British Open.

In 26 seasons of play there have been 419 victories on the PGA Tour by Web.com alumni. A total of 387 different players (including repeat winners) had won their cards through the Web.com. The tour has expanded into South and Central America and into Nova Scotia.

The purses have gone up from \$100,000 to as much as \$1 million, though a player would have to finish in the top 10 to be really making a living.

More than just a stepping-stone, the Web.com Tour is also a safety net. PGA Tour players who drop outside the top 125 in the FedEx Cup points list are placed on conditional status, locking them out of certain events. Those who fall between 126 and 200 in points qualify for the Web.com Tour finals and can earn their cards back in those four tournaments. If they don’t, they can still earn a card for the Web.com season, and many have done just that. This past season, four players 40 and older regained their PGA Tour cards through the Web.com—Dickie Pride, Shane Bertsch, Rod Pampling and Darron Stiles. Lucas Glover, the winner of the 2009 U.S. Open, got his card back in the same way.

“I’ve been 22 years off and on the PGA Tour—how many years on the PGA Tour itself, I don’t even know. Not enough, how about that?” says 46-year-old Dickie Pride with a chuckle during the PGA Tour event



Ben Martin (top, center) with his PGA Tour card, presented by Web.com Tour president Bill Calfee (top, left) and vice president of sports marketing Rich Shafer. Dickie Pride (at left) regained his PGA card as a senior Web.com player.

in Las Vegas in October. “The Web.com Tour has morphed into something completely different than it used to be,” explains the veteran. “It’s changed over the years to where now it’s the way to get to the PGA Tour and there’s only one route, which is the Web.com.

“It’s a different beast than it used to be. It’s a really good tour. To me it’s more of an interesting mix because you have a bunch of kids with a lot of talent who don’t know how to be professionals yet, you’ve got some older players—and you are going to see more older, established players out there if they have a bad year play to get their status back. I’m definitely the older player. It’s fun to be with those kids. I finished in the top 25

this year and Shane Bertsch and Rod Pampling and Darron Stiles, all in our 40s and got our cards back.”

Pardon Shane Bertsch if he feels like he’s been on a shuttle between the tours the past 20 years, but that’s the way it’s gone for the 45-year-old. Poor play and unfortunate injuries took their toll on his ability to play PGA Tour golf. But he’s back, courtesy of the Web.com Tour.

“I got my Nike card in 1995. I’ve been between the two tours for 20 years. Eight on PGA, 12 on the other,” says Bertsch. “Once you’ve played the PGA Tour, the Web.com Tour is the tour you don’t want to play. But, if you are not on the PGA Tour, you love to play it. It’s a love-hate relationship with the Web.com Tour. I think some people hate it so much they don’t play good and never get back, instead of embracing the fact they still have a place to play golf for a living, which we are so lucky to have, where you can try to keep improving and get back out here.



Keegan Bradley came off a solid 2010 performance in the Web.com Tour and won his first major—the 2011 PGA Championship—in a three-way playoff. The victory also led to rookie-of-the-year honors.

“It’s a lifeline, but it’s hard to make a living out there,” he says. “You can’t finish 26th every year. Financially it just doesn’t work.”

Pride can attest to the difficulty of trying to make ends meet when you are playing only on the Web.com Tour.

“It’s difficult to be part time on PGA Tour and keep your card. I’ve done it, but it’s really difficult,” says Pride, who is married and has two children. He explains that Web.com events have winning purses that are only 10 percent of what is paid out for winners on the PGA Tour.

“We play for 10 percent of the purses but the bills are still the same,” he says. “Airlines don’t give you a discount because you play on the Web.com Tour. But professional golf is difficult, so it’s okay.”

Ben Martin learned how tough pro golf is from the git-go. He was fortunate to earn his PGA Tour card straight out of college in 2010, but he lost it at the end of the 2011 season. He went to the Web.com Tour for two seasons, becoming a winner in 2013, then reaching the PGA Tour again in 2014 where he won the Las Vegas event. The Web.com Tour gave him the confidence and the experience to win on the biggest stage.

“The biggest thing it taught me is how to be a professional. How to travel, manage your time,” says Martin. “I think it’s a lot tougher to travel out there because on the PGA Tour you have the West Coast swing, the Florida swing, tournaments that are close together. Out there you start off the year in South and Central America, there is really no rhyme or reason to how they set the schedule. You are flying back and forth, that can be a little bit of a grind.

“But also when you have some success out there like I did in 2013. It teaches you how to be in contention, how to win, how to finish. I had six, seven top 10s and two wins. Taught me how to grind it out on Sunday and win a golf tournament.”

Keegan Bradley came off a successful 2010 Web.com season to win the PGA Championship and become the PGA Tour rookie of the year in

It isn’t just the bigger markets that make the Web.com Tour what it is today. It’s the caliber of play, and what’s at stake.

side would not have been my priority. My priority would have been to get to the PGA Tour. This isn’t a place I’m going to be forever or I’m going to do something else. The purses aren’t going to be high enough for a guy who wants to play on the Web.com Tour for a long time.

Pride always wanted to be “Here” rather than “There,” but “There” was certainly better than “Nowhere.”

“I was on the Players Advisory Committee last year and I’d tell them flat out I would rather be on the PGA Tour,” says Pride. “If you are on the Web.com and you don’t want to get to the next level, and aren’t fired up to get there, then you probably don’t need to be a professional golfer.”

There is some murmuring among players that Web.com Tour purses are kept purposely low to drive the desire to get to the PGA Tour, or to get out. Calfee says that’s not so.

“We’ve never held back purses. We would like to see purses grow,” says Calfee. “It’s really a function of the markets and the events and how successful they are in terms of revenue. There is always a bal-

ance between charity and purse. A lot of host organizations, their first priority is charity. And charity is very, very important to us on the PGA Tour. But our first priority is to our players and their financial benefits. We do contribute \$300,000 to \$400,000 to each purse in the markets. In the renewal process we are asking tournaments to raise their purses, especially those who are very successful from a charitable perspective.”

All the players on the Web.com Tour would like to be playing for more money. But the way to do that is to play well enough to make it to the PGA Tour. The Web.com Tour is the way to go from “There” to “Here.”

And now a whole bunch of Web.com players are saying, “Here we come.” ♦

Jeff Williams is a contributing editor of CIGAR AFICIONADO.



THE DUCK'S NUTS!

A colloquial but most compelling way to describe the world's sexiest, most forgiving golf clubs that launch higher, go further, feel softer and have a sweet spot the size of Texas.

We're PXG. We make the finest golf equipment money can buy.

WARNING: Our clubs are amazing but expensive! PXG clubs feature revolutionary USGA approved technology (53 patents issued or pending), are made with the finest alloys and materials and manufactured using a costly, sophisticated process only we would use.

To find out if you can "swing" a set, call us at 1-844-PLAY-PXG or visit PXG.COM.



PARSONS XTREME GOLF

Nobody makes golf clubs like we do. Period.

PXG clubs are played on tour by Ryan Moore, Rocco Mediate, Sadena Parks and Beatriz Recari.

Rocky  Patel

SPECIAL RESERVE
SUN GROWN
✦ MADURO ✦



LANCERO



TORO



SIXTY



ROBUSTO



PETITE BELICOSO

✦ TWEET, FOLLOW OR VISIT AT ✦



Rocky  Patel

SPECIAL RESERVE

SUN GROWN

— MADURO —

PREMIUM HAND-ROLLED TOBACCO

— TABACALERA TAVIGUSA • ESTELI, NICARAGUA —

TWENTY
TORO 6 1/2 x 52



Plunkert

The Reality of Fantasy

The controversial world of fantasy sports betting has become the domain of quite serious and adept gamblers

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PLUNKERT

Everything being equal, Assani Fisher would much rather be in Las Vegas. But, like all professional gamblers, he follows the action. And, as of this past October 15, the world capital of wagering provides no action for anyone who makes a living betting on daily fantasy sports. Nevada's Gaming Control Board decided that unlicensed daily fantasy sports would be banned. With no sites licensed in the state, Fisher and others of his ilk fled Sin City for places that are less sinful but more accepting of what those vested in the fantasy world insist is a game of skill.

That's how Fisher wound up in a nicely appointed apartment in San Diego, near the beach and around the corner from Petco Park, home of the Padres. There are floor-to-ceiling windows, a snazzy kitchen and a terrace where 33-year-old Fisher repairs for hits of marijuana. Most importantly, though, there is cable, Wi-Fi, and a flat-screen TV hanging on the wall. These simple things are all that he needs.

Before April 15, 2011, when online poker became illegal in the United States, Fisher made his living by playing cards. "I was the best heads-up pot-limit Omaha high/low player," he says. "Then, in September of 2014, I first played daily fantasy football. Once NBA came around, I started

NORTEÑO 
FROM DREW ESTATE MASTER BLENDER
WILLY HERRERA

NORTEÑO: A SPICY, BOLD AND ROBUST CIGAR THAT EXEMPLIFIES
THE HEART OF NICARAGUAN TOBACCOS

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Cigars Are Not A Safe Alternative To Cigarettes.



THE REBIRTH OF CIGARS
WWW.DREWSTATE.COM



taking it real seriously. I ran an initial deposit of \$600 up to \$25,000, lost it all, and then ran it up again—past \$500,000, past \$750,000. A few days ago, I was a millionaire for like 24 hours.”

Daily fantasy sports betting (DFS) is particularly well-suited for online poker players. It involves strategizing within a very specific framework, understanding statistics, reading between the lines, outsmarting opponents and finding the so-called fish. Unlike the season-long fantasy football leagues that so many people participate in with co-workers, friends and patrons of their local bar, DFS resolves itself each day or so. Participants receive 50,000 to 60,000 theoretical dollars and buy players at prices commensurate with their skill levels.

As the afternoon sun blazes outside his window, Fisher has his laptop open and his focus on the NBA roster. He’s looking for outliers, players whose expected performances today have not been baked into their offering prices. He seeks value in much the same way that poker players do when contemplating whether to call or raise. “For example,” he says, “I chose Isaiah Thomas because he’s starting today and usually doesn’t. Typically, Thomas comes off the bench to shoot. Because he’s starting he’ll be playing for more minutes than his price represents and he’ll be doing lots of shooting throughout the game.”

Over the course of this afternoon, Fisher will methodically select players for each of four slates of games on FanDuel and DraftKings. His decisions are guided by statistical information, matchups and breaking reports about upcoming games. It’s a far cry from the approaches employed by casual competitors with day jobs who will simply select their favorite players. If Fisher’s picks do better than those of the people he is betting against, Fisher will win money. He enters all the multiplayer tournaments he can get into and, with a few exceptions, will play one-on-one against anybody who’s willing to take him on. Considering that he’ll participate in some 2,500 events today, wagering sums of money that range from 25 cents to \$10,000, his result can be meaningful. On his best day, Fisher says he won \$170,000. His worst loss totaled close to \$90,000. By the last tip-off of today, Fisher will have some \$200,000 in play.

Assani Fisher is a lifelong lover of all things sport. But his preoccupation with fantasy—he bets everything from football to basketball to baseball to golf to NASCAR—has changed the way he watches games. His fan’s perspective has been replaced with statistical analysis. “You don’t care if a team wins,” he says. “You care about a ball going to a guy. I can’t root for my favorite team when I am rooting for myself to make money. It’s actually made me into less of a sports fan. I grew up in Maryland, played college basketball and was a Washington Wizards fan. But now? I don’t give a shit.”

Anyone who fails to see Fisher’s actions as gambling is delusional—or an employee of DraftKings.

Daily fantasy sports is a strange beast. In a nation where online poker is all but prohibited, where most sports bettors must wager illegally, where professional sports teams and leagues are vocal opponents of sports betting, daily fantasy sports seems to get a pass. At least until recently. While the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act made online poker illegal almost five years ago, it also included a carve-out for fantasy sports as well as such enterprises as the lottery. It didn’t declare that fantasy wasn’t gambling—that notion comes from spokespeople at FanDuel and DraftKings, who



Fantasy betting’s dominant websites. FanDuel CEO Nigel Eccles, top left, and VP Tom Griffiths, top right, and a worker at DraftKings (above).

emphasize the element of skill and downplay luck—just that it would be allowed. Of course, at that point, fantasy sports was a backwater enterprise where the action ran slow and steady.

Besides, back in 2011, the daily version of fantasy sports almost didn’t exist. For the most part fantasy sports was a season-long activity. Those who played fantasy football chose players in August and spent the football season rooting on their cobbled-together teams, hoping for quarterbacks to throw touchdowns and for running backs to rush for lots of yardage. Commercial leagues existed and enough players made impressive livings from season-long fantasy that it was covered in the November 2010 issue of this magazine. At the time, it was low profile and on the fringe.

Far more obscure was the brainchild of Kevin Bonnett. The computer engineer had already had, in the words of journalist Bill Ordine, his “St. Paul moment,” when he figured out that if you could bet fantasy sports for a season, you could also bet it for a day and achieve a lot more velocity. In 2007, Bonnett launched FantasySportsLive, but the site failed to capture the public’s imagination. Two years later, according to Ordine, author of



NICARAGUAN FIRE DOMINICAN FLAIR

a world of stories



AVO CIGARS

SYNCRO
NICARAGUA

AVO SYNCRO NICARAGUA. EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF SURPRISING NOTES FROM DIVERSE CULTURES. BEGINNING WITH A UNIQUELY SWEET AND SPICY TOBACCO GROWN IN THE RICH, VOLCANIC SOIL OF ISLA OMETEPE. KNOWN FOR ITS WILD CHARACTER AND PEPPERY NOTES, WE CAREFULLY BLEND THIS NICARAGUAN TOBACCO WITH ONLY THE FINEST DOMINICAN LEAVES, FAMOUS FOR THEIR EARTHY FLAVORS AND SOFT, CREAMY NOTES. THE RESULT IS AN EXCEPTIONAL BOX-PRESSED CIGAR WITH UNEXPECTED DEPTH AND COMPLEXITY. AN EXPERIENCE PERFECTLY IN SYNC WITH THE MOMENTS WORTH SHARING.



SAVOR *every* NOTE

f t i | AVO.COM



When New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman called for a ban on fantasy betting this fall, protesters demonstrated outside his office.

Fantasy Sports, Real Money, a Scotsman by the name of Nigel Eccles launched a website called Hubdub. It allowed people to predict outcomes in entertainment (which movie would win an Oscar), politics (who would win an election) and sports (which team would win a game).

Eccles was scheduled to do a presentation at the 2009 South by Southwest conference, a film, music and interactive media gathering. But he had nothing to present and decided to bluff by telling the audience about his latest innovation: a thing called FanDuel in which people could bet against each other on daily fantasy sports. Never mind that the thing did not yet really exist. “They wound up using a little bit of startup money to get FanDuel going,” says Ordine. “Eccles went on round after round of venture-capital raising and managed to keep the lights on. Then, in 2012, three sharp kids from Boston launched DraftKings. Both sites took off and Kevin Bonnett goes down in history as the guy with the great idea who never cashed in.”

As daily fantasy sports betting has captured the imagination of American gamblers, the powers that be in professional sports—franchise owners, league executives and broadcasters—began to recognize it as the perfect sticky for keeping fans engaged. They already knew that betting can draw fans into games, even when they aren’t otherwise interested. But it also creates opportunities for corruption that sports executives are extremely uncomfortable with. After all, bribing a star quarterback to manage his offense so that his team wins by, say, fewer than seven points, could be worth millions. That temptation explains why professional sports teams don’t make their homes in Las Vegas.

But DFS was different: it presented no downside and increased upside for the powers that be. Nobody could make money by bribing a single player and participants are even more engaged in the games than they would be with a straightforward wager. DFS fanatics watch blowouts until the bitter end, desperate to see how their players are doing and not really caring about the actual winner of the game. Fantasy sports, as Ordine puts it, “allows the leagues to have their cake and eat it too.” No wonder then

that major investors include Fox Sports, NBA, MLB, Madison Square Garden, and team owners Jerry Jones and Robert Kraft. Thirty out of the 32 NFL teams have advertising deals with the sites.

The teams justify this arrangement by putting traditional sports betting in one basket and fantasy sports in another. The NFL views sports betting as outcome-based (you bet on a particular team to beat another team) while fantasy is performance-based (money rides on how well particular players do, independent of their teams).

“The NFL sees a huge distinction, and now they have a horse in this race,” says Ordine. “They understand the profit to be realized from the game within the game. But now the question centers around whether they will cut and run on daily fantasy or double down and say that the people arguing against it are wrong.”

Until September 27, daily fantasy sports seemed to be tooling along with limitless open road in front of it. TV viewers were inundated with commercials that depicted nobodies striking it rich. Commentators discussed it on ESPN. DFS had permeated mainstream culture in much the same way that online poker had during the earlier part of this century. In fact, DraftKings was a chief sponsor of the World Series of Poker to the degree that a tournament was named for the fantasy site. Even people who did not participate in daily fantasy sports enjoyed talking about it. Then the other shoe dropped. It came out that Ethan Haskell, an employee of DraftKings, had early access to player lineups on September 27. That happens to be the day when he played in a tournament on competing site FanDuel (which is a fairly common practice since employees are not allowed to play on the sites for which they work) and took down the first prize of \$350,000.

It’s unclear whether or not Haskell had access to this information before his tournaments locked. But the perception—which is not helped by a widely circulated photo that shows him smirking and looking very cocky, wearing a backwards DraftKings baseball hat—is not good. Quickly, he became accused of insider trading (probably a misnomer) and politicians began stepping up and threatening to shut down the sites. An oft-quoted number pointed out that the top one percent of DFS players win

Fantasy fanatics watch blowouts until the bitter end, desperate to see how their players are doing and not really caring about the winner of the game.

90 percent of the money. It’s a compelling statistic but a skewed one. Those top participants play in hundreds of contests per day, so it makes sense for them to win the lion’s share of money. That one percent of winners puts up 40 percent of the sites’ entry fees.

But daily fantasy’s detractors have been vocal. Joe Asher, CEO of the legal sports book William Hill USA, has called for regulation. A federal grand jury in Florida began investigating the industry. Eric Schneiderman, the attorney general for New York, has demanded that fantasy be shut down in the state. A temporary ruling was scheduled to be announced as CIGAR AFICIONADO went to press. Lawmakers in Florida and Illinois are floating licensing bills with \$500,000 entry fees. Payment processors in

PASSION THROUGH THE YEARS

For nearly 140 years, cigar smokers have enjoyed a passionate love affair with Romeo y Julieta cigars.

Building on the success of Romeo by Romeo y Julieta, the new Anejo features a *stalk-cut* dark Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper, complimented by *double fermented* 2008 *vintage tobaccos*.

Anejo is a rich and robust cigar with undertones of dark chocolate and coffee for a memorable smoke

Romeo Anejo by Romeo y Julieta.
A passion though the years.

**RO
ME**
AÑEJO 0TM

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale.



Ry
ROMEO Y JULIETA®

Facebook.com/TheCigarLife Twitter.com/TheCigarLife

Join www.montecristosocialclub.com

New York have stopped taking deposits and making payments—tantamount to cutting off the industry's lifeblood. In Massachusetts, there is talk of the lottery commission regulating DFS. Sports columnist Bill Simmons dismissed fantasy as something that only the sharpest players can beat and HBO's John Oliver did a devastatingly funny 19-minute-long takedown. His conclusion? "If you love gambling, you'll love DraftKings!" Football legend Joe Namath also chimed in succinctly: "Do they have to pay anything to play? And do they win something? It's gambling." More seriously, in the wake of the Haskell scandal, issues of consumer protection keep coming up. "Daily fantasy is at a turning point," says Chris Grove, editor of LegalSportsReport.com, a digital publication that covers the online gambling industry. "We are seeing the first test of the legal foundation that daily fantasy is built on. The early results of the test do not look promising."

Could this all be about the states and casinos wanting to get their monetary end of the business? After all, people have only so much money to gamble with. If they lose money at fantasy sports, they have less available for buying lottery tickets and wagering in casinos or at the track. "That's part of the conversation, but, really there is not much for the government to take," says Grove. "Right now none of the major sites are profitable. They are in a land-rush state, spending a lot of money on marketing in order to bring in players. And there are questions about the

"Do they have to pay anything to play? And do they win something? It's gambling." —JOE NAMATH

long-term viability of this industry. Unlike with an online casino, [fantasy players] cannot be in action all day and night. That presents a problem in terms of recouping revenue." Furthermore, he adds, the high-profile investments were not always what they sounded like: "The NBA didn't put up cash. It was basically a swap of status for being the official fantasy game of the NBA. DraftKings got \$150 million from Fox Sports [for an 11 percent stake] but committed to purchasing \$250 million in advertising. That's very aggressive and sounds like a pretty good deal for Fox Sports."

For all of the negative attention that has recently swirled around daily fantasy sports, players themselves seem unfazed. "From the beginning of the NFL season, the fantasy trajectory was going straight up," says David Copeland, CEO of SuperLobby.com, a company that aggregates DFS-related data. "After the scandal it kept going up... I don't think anyone has stopped playing because of what is going on [with Ethan Haskell]. Instead, maybe, they're not playing because their states won't allow it. The scandal was the big chance for handle to go down. But it didn't. It actually went up."

Back in San Diego, the day's NBA matches are in full swing and Assani Fisher is channel surfing between games, paying particular attention to the Houston Rockets as they play the Sacramento Kings. Fisher's fantasy picks are heavily weighted toward players on the Rockets. "I have them because of injuries," he says, illustrating the kind of thinking that goes into being a winning player. "The starting center is hurt, which means that his backup, Clint Capela, will be on the court a lot more than usual but the sites have him priced as a backup. The Rockets are also

missing a backup point guard and a starting power forward. As a result, everybody will be expected to take more shots than usual."

The day shapes up to be less than great for Fisher. One pick, Rodney Stuckey, gets injured after scoring just 8.5 fantasy points. Anthony Davis, a player with a lot of promise, burned Fisher once (contributing to a loss of \$70,000 in a single day) and has left him feeling a little gun-shy. So Fisher went light on Davis, who happens to be having the banner day that everyone predicted. On one of his big bets, for \$15,000, Fisher has three players in the Miami Heat v. Indiana Pacers game. With 6.8 seconds left to play, he trails his opponent by 4.6 points. The score of the game is 89–86. "I need overtime," says Fisher, explaining that it will allow his three players to log more fantasy points and potentially put him ahead. "That's the only way I can win. But the worst will be if it goes into OT and none of my guys score."

Fisher will not live out that misery. The game finishes on the regulation clock and his loss contributes to an overall beating that at one point looks as if it could be as much as \$120,000. By day's end, worst-case scenarios aren't realized and Fisher drops only \$87,000. "I had bad variance and a lot of things didn't go my way," he says with the stoicism of a professional poker player who's used to the brutal swings of his profession. "I lost as much as \$75,000 to just one player who I usually beat." He repairs to the deck for a smoke. "This is just one day," he says. "I lose 40 percent of the time and know better than to sit here and feel sorry for myself."

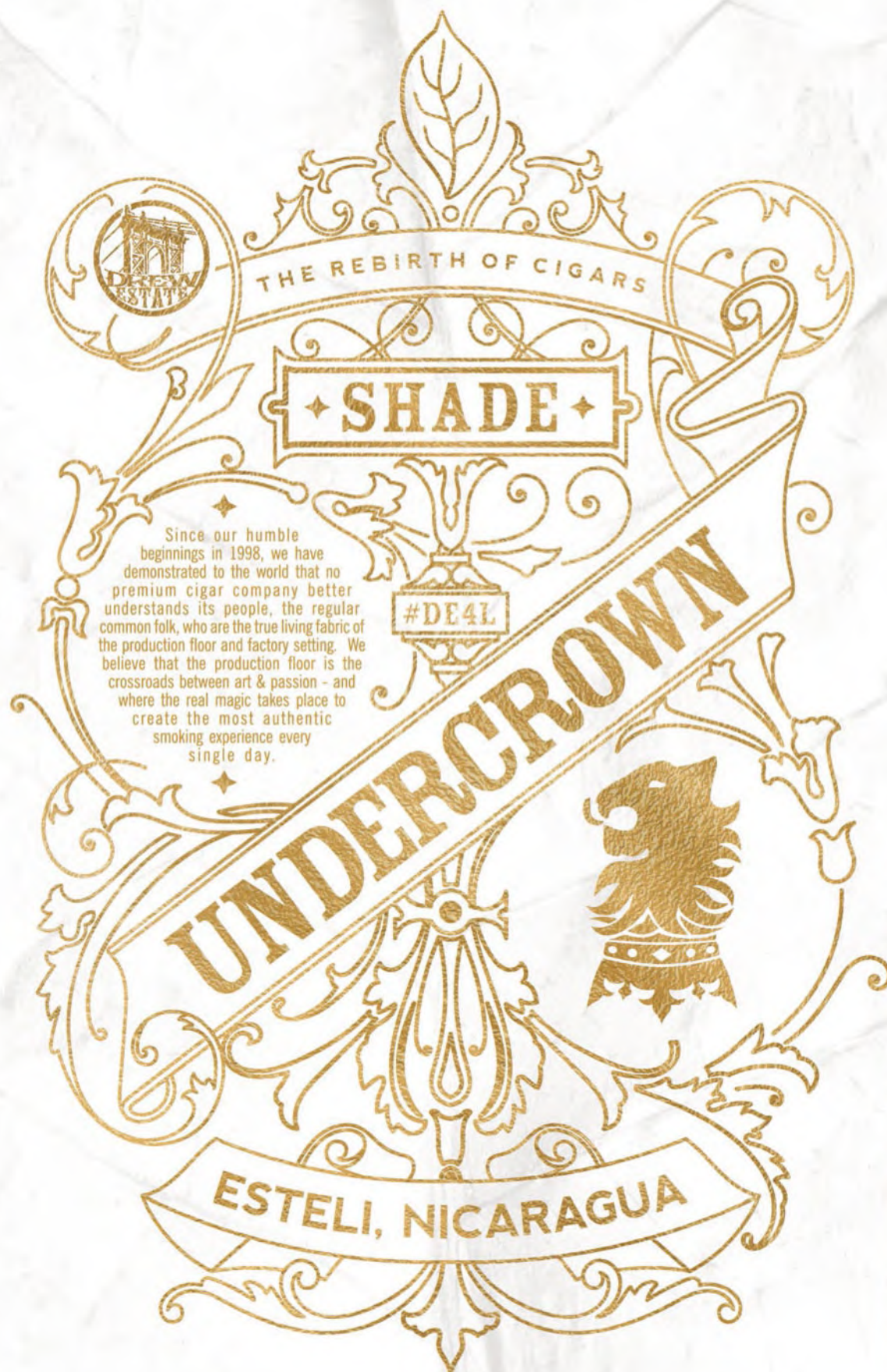
A bigger, more looming concern centers on how much longer DFS will exist in its current form. Like Fisher, Max Steinberg is a former online poker pro who made the leap to DFS. He managed to win a seat for World Series of Poker Main Event by performing well in a tournament on DraftKings. He participated in the entire poker tournament patched-up with the DraftKings logo and played well enough to make the final table. But, in the wake of the Haskell debacle, DraftKings had pulled all of its WSOP advertising (including logos around the TV table) and asked Steinberg to play the last round without the patches. "DraftKings didn't want to be associated with gambling," Steinberg says, who believes that the industry has been a victim of its high profile. "I was a little surprised. They were being cautious but I don't think [gaining distance from poker] changes anything."

Steinberg can't love his timing: DraftKings was guaranteeing \$10 million in their big tournaments at the start of the football season, now it's \$6 million. "It's depressing that I keep getting good at things that the government shuts down," groans Steinberg. "In four years, it's been online poker and now, possibly, daily fantasy. I don't know how many people experience this kind of thing with their work."

The good news for Steinberg is that daily fantasy sports—unlike online poker—will probably not become completely moribund. Still signs indicate that its best, softest, most freewheeling days are ticking down. "On the one side you have a product supported by sports leagues, teams, and investors—with the potential to make a lot of money for everybody," says Chris Grove. "But on the other side, you have states asking questions about the legality of it all. If it does get regulated, there will be additional costs putting pressure on an already stretched business model."

How does Grove think it will all shake out? "Nobody can say for sure," he replies. "But I think we can all agree that, one year from today, daily fantasy sports will look dramatically different from what it is right now. ❖

Michael Kaplan is a CIGAR AFICIONADO contributing editor.



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:

Cigars Are Not A Safe Alternative To Cigarettes.

ENJOY THE AUTHENTIC MAJESTY OF SHADE
CREAMY, SMOOTH & LUSH
WWW.DREWSTATE.COM



H.2K.CT

MY FATHER CIGARS





MY FATHER[®]
CIGARS

Centurion

H·2K·CT



WWW.MYFATHERCIGARS.COM
305.468.9501



Turns out, Cuba's mystique was a method.



Introducing

CAO | pilón[®]



[pee-'lohn]

When we set out to make a new cigar for the CAO Classic Series, we went straight to a fermentation technique used in old-world Cuba, the round pilón. Abandoned nearly a half century ago in favor of less time-consuming methods, what the round pilón costs in duration, it rewards with flavor. And while patience is tested and resources are spent, we believe the richer, more complex taste is worthy of a comeback.

Learn more at caocigars.com

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The
Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale.

A photograph of three cigars and a glass ashtray on a dark, textured slate surface. One cigar, labeled 'LA AURORA', stands vertically. Another, labeled 'SYMMETRY', lies diagonally. A third, labeled 'CAMACHO', lies horizontally across a dark, patterned glass ashtray. A fourth cigar, labeled 'SA TURRENT', lies horizontally in the foreground.

cigars

126 BLIND TASTING

Our panel of cigar-smoking editors assesses the quality of 79 cigars from around the world in a blind taste test.

140 VINTAGE TASTING

A trio of aged smokes score a near-perfect 98 points. One is a Cuban Davidoff, the other a Cuban Partagás, but the third comes from Nicaragua—a Padrón created to celebrate the millennium.

143 A Q&A WITH ALAN RUBIN OF ALEC BRADLEY CIGARS

Alan Rubin has seen ebbs and flows in his career, including an all-time high when the Alec Bradley Prensado Churchill won CIGAR AFICIONADO'S Cigar of the Year award. Rubin recounts what life has been like after being No. 1.

150 THE COPRESIDENTS OF HABANOS S.A. SPEAK

Since President Obama announced changes in U.S.-Cuba diplomatic relations, Habanos S.A., the worldwide distributor of Cuban cigars, has been preparing for the end of the embargo. This means careful planning.

For much more on cigars, turn to page 48 to read about the Top 25 cigars of 2015, Best Buys and New Releases.

Photo by Jeff Harris; Fused Glass Single Ashtray provided by Vanderburgh & Co.

churchills

Ashton Symmetry is the first new Ashton brand in many years, and the Prestige size scored an impressive 93 points. Made by the Fuentes in the Dominican Republic for Ashton Distributors Inc., Symmetry didn't reach the market until 2014, its release delayed due to a fire in a Fuente warehouse that damaged large amounts of tobacco intended for the project. It's the first Ashton to be made with Nicaraguan tobacco, and it harmonized beautifully with the blend, putting it atop our Churchill category. Enclave is the newest release from growing Nicaraguan producer A.J. Fernandez, and it's a cigar that touts balance over power. The Churchill earned 92 points. A perennial high-scoring Nicaraguan cigar, the large and chunky Padrón Serie 1926 No. 1, scored 91 points.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ASHTON SYMMETRY PRESTIGE

Dark and imposing with an oily wrapper, this cedary-tasting Churchill has a bold, meaty underpinning with notes of bittersweet chocolate and an earthy finish. A medium- to full-bodied smoke.

U.S.: \$12.75 U.K.: N/A

93



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: CAMEROON
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ENCLAVE CHURCHILL

A gorgeous big cigar with a reddish-brown wrapper and uncut foot. Each puff is full of earthy, bready notes punctuated by hints of carob chips and coffee. There are some charry notes on the finish.

U.S.: \$6.70 U.K.: N/A

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN SERIE 1926 NO. 1

Softly pressed with round edges, this large cigar begins herbal and woody, but takes on notes of coffee and dried cocoa powder. A delicious, medium-bodied cigar.

U.S.: \$21.40 U.K.: N/A

91



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY TEMPUS NICARAGUA CENTURIA

The smoke of this dark Churchill has a salt-and-pepper character, along with touches of wheat and licorice. The finish is minty and charry.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

NAT SHERMAN 1930 INMENSO

There's plenty of sweet almond and sugary peanut notes to this cigar. Nougat and vanilla bean intonations come in as well, though the entire Churchill is overly sweet, especially on the finish.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A

89

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: INDONESIA
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

COHIBA CHURCHILL

A medium-bodied cigar that is cloaked in a cover leaf with a sandy texture. It's woody and nutty, with notes of cedar and minerals. The finish is a bit dry.
U.S.: \$19.09 U.K.: N/A

88**U.S.A.**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

DON PEPIN GARCIA ORIGINAL DELICIAS

Covered in an oily, streaky wrapper, this Churchill begins toasty and oaky, developing some medium- to full-bodied notes of cashew and baking spice before a charry finish.
U.S.: \$8.45 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GLORIA CUBANA CHURCHILL

Bready and earthy with a molasses sweetness and a citrus zing. There's a salty note too before the charry finish.
U.S.: \$6.19 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: INDONESIA

ROMEO Y JULIETA 1875 CHURCHILL

A notably veiny Churchill with a slightly uneven burn but substantial draw. It's a woody, wheaty smoke with a citrus note and mineral component. Faint walnut notes appear on the finish.
U.S.: \$7.15 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 6 7/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

E.P. CARRILLO SELECCIÓN OSCURO DINAMICOS

A dark and veiny cigar that delivers an earthy, medium- to full-bodied smoke with sweet touches of brown sugar and burnt citrus on the palate.
U.S.: \$8.25 U.K.: N/A

87**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS, DOM. REP.
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CAMACHO ECUADOR CHURCHILL

One side of this cigar refuses to burn, regardless of attempted relights. It's a salty smoke with a touch of graham cracker, a bit of mint and an ashy aftertaste.
U.S.: \$7.75 U.K.: N/A

86**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CAO GOLD CHURCHILL

The smoke of this blond Churchill has a creamy texture, imparting bright citrus notes balanced by earthiness, but a chalky, papery finish affected the score.
U.S.: \$6.89 U.K.: N/A

86

corona gordas

Somewhere in the Connecticut River Valley, a tobacco farm grows an unusual Cuban-seed wrapper for the Garcia family. That wrapper is found on the El Centurion H-2K-CT line of cigars, and the brand's Toro Box-Pressed scored 93 points. The Garcias won't say who the grower is nor tell exactly where the farm plot is located, but we can say with certainty that the tobacco is interesting and distinct. Two cigars scored 92 points. This Cuban Cohiba Siglo VI comes in a glossy, pull-top style tubo and dons the new holographic band designed to thwart counterfeiters. Striking in its scarlet band, the new La Palina Red Label is made at the PDR Cigars factory in the Dominican Republic.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

EL CENTURION H-2K-CT TORO BOX PRESSED

An impeccably made box-pressed cigar that starts toasty and nutty and warms to show a honeyed sweetness. Nuanced with a long and pleasing finish.
U.S.: \$8.10 U.K.: N/A

93



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2015

COHIBA SIGLO VI (TUBO)

A tan toro with a gleaming wrapper and substantial draw. This is a nutty smoke that imparts notes of almonds, graham cracker and rock candy. A touch of spicy cinnamon appears on the finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £35.16

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA PALINA RED LABEL TORO

This cigar has a toothy wrapper and burns well. Cedar and nutty intonations of pecan leave a toasty graham cracker finish with a touch of minerality on the palate.
U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

AGING ROOM SMALL BATCH M35611 MEZZO

With a full and easy draw, this well-made corona gorda offers notes of leather, salt and spicy red pepper that develop touches of vanilla and cinnamon.
U.S.: \$9.32 U.K.: N/A

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PARTAGAS 1845 EXTRA FUERTE ROBUSTO GORDO

Earthy notes of vanilla bean and wood become sweet and more sophisticated, showing a profound salted caramel and toffee character before a leathery finish. Medium-bodied and balanced.
U.S.: \$7.49 U.K.: N/A

91



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2015

RAMON ALLONES SUR EXCLUSIVO LÍBANO

Draped in a tawny, colorado wrapper, this toro starts salty and floral but develops toasty and earthy elements that lead to a long and pleasing almond-paste finish.
U.S.: N/A LEBANON: \$15.00

91

**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
BINDER: COSTA RICA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PLACERES RESERVA COLOSOS

Covered in a notably veiny wrapper, this corona gorda imparts a sweet-and-spicy balance of graham cracker, licorice and cinnamon that combine for a nutty, anise finish.

U.S.: \$7.20 U.K.: N/A

90**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

FLOR DEL VALLE GRAN VALLE

Perfectly constructed, this cigar showcases big notes of earth and spice that lead into a sweet and toasty brown sugar finish.

U.S.: \$9.75 U.K.: N/A

89**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PADRÓN DÁMASO NO. 15

This blond corona gorda has an easy draw and even burn. There is a creamy texture to the smoke, with notes of graham cracker, toast and a touch of honey.

U.S.: \$15.00 U.K.: N/A

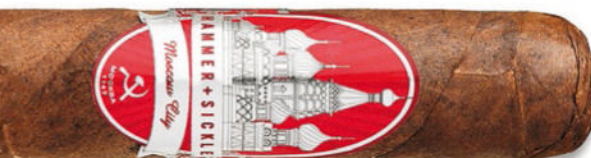
89**CUBA**

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 5 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2015

**H. UPMANN MAGNUM 56
EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2015**

A fat, well-made cigar packed with tobacco. It starts out floral and herbaceous but becomes woody and slightly gummy. There are notes of sweet vanilla on the finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £28.96

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

**HAMMER + SICKLE MOSCOW CITY
DOUBLE ROBUSTO**

This thick, medium-bodied toro begins floral and minty before picking up some toasted almond notes and a charred-oak finish.

U.S.: \$8.99 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

KRISTOFF CAMEROON MATADOR

First impressions of wheat and wood become leathery and earthy with an overwhelming mineral finish. The burn and draw of this medium-bodied cigar is consistently even.

U.S.: \$5.08 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

TED'S FARRIS 5 1/2 X 56

A softly pressed cigar with some minor veins and an airy draw. The smoke shows a nutty, earthy character complemented by touches of wood.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, PERU
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

**MONTECRISTO WHITE VINTAGE
CONNECTICUT DOUBLE CORONA**

Covered in a pale and sandy-colored wrapper, this Churchill begins light with a papery smoke, but picks up zesty touches of dried citrus before the woody finish. A mild cigar.

U.S.: \$12.50 U.K.: N/A

87

figurados

There are two ways one can go about smoking an aged Cuban cigar. The first way would be for the smoker to buy a “futures” box and age the smokes himself. That requires time, patience and an ability to identify age-worthy cigars. The second way is to buy cigars that are already aged. Habanos S.A., the worldwide distributor of all Cuban cigars has opted for choice number two and aged the cigars in its new Añejados aging program. The Romeo y Julieta Pirámides Añejados scored 92 points. This particular sample came from a box dated with a 2008 production code, indicating that these cigars were aged seven years before they were tested. The Pirámides is a classic size in the Cuban portfolio, but unusual for the Romeo y Julieta line, which is part of the allure and novelty of the Añejados program. Not only does the smoker get an aged cigar, but a shape uncommon to the brand. Note how the secondary band reads “Añejados” to distinguish this series from regular-production Cubans. Five cigars scored 91 points in this tasting of figurados, all ranging in shape, blending styles and countries of origin.



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2008

ROMEO Y JULIETA PIRÁMIDES AÑEJADOS

There's a bold and profound nutmeg quality to this torpedo that's underscored by notes of baking spice and earth. The finish resonates with sea salt and chocolate.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.31

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY NICA PURO ROSADO TORPEDO

A torpedo that starts toasty with a note of cocoa powder but develops a rich, sweeter character, taking on elements of honey, wood and nuts.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY SHORT STORY MADURO

The uneven burn of this near-black perfecto corrects itself. The smoke combines dark chocolate notes and orange zest with rock salt and a sweet, breadly finish.

U.S.: \$5.60 U.K.: N/A

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

FLORES Y RODRIGUEZ 10TH ANNIVERSARY RESERVA LIMITADA FIGURADO

A long cigar with a tapered head and foot. It smokes evenly and delivers woody, wheaty notes backed by creamy, almond intonations. Elegant and nuanced.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR BELICOSO

Packed solid with tobacco, this box-pressed belicoso integrates notes of cocoa bean and coffee with sweet woodiness and a touch of leather. There's a touch of licorice on the finish.

U.S.: \$8.25 U.K.: N/A

91



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROCKY PATEL SUN GROWN TORPEDO

A symmetrically rolled torpedo that imparts a medium-bodied smoke. It's meaty and peppery throughout with touches of chocolate and an earthy finish.

U.S.: \$9.15 U.K.: N/A

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA D. MAGNUS II CALIGULA

Double-tapered and box-pressed, this full-bodied figurado is rich and heavy with earth, coffee bean and chocolate notes interwoven with toast and a nuttiness for a voluptuous mouth feel.

U.S.: \$10.95 U.K.: N/A

90



MEXICO

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, MEXICO
BINDER: NICARAGUA, MEXICO
WRAPPER: MEXICO

CASA TURRENT 1901 TORPEDO

Flatly pressed torpedo with a dark, maduro wrapper. There's an earthy, incense quality to the smoke along with notes of dark chocolate and a licorice finish. A medium-bodied cigar.

U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO 80TH ANNIVERSARY NO. 2

This neatly pressed torpedo is well-made and wears an attractive, near-pristine wrapper. The smoke is sweet and nutty with an almond quality and touches of cocoa.

U.S.: \$22.00 U.K.: N/A

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI PIRAMIDE FINO

An attractive belicoso with a soft head and thin draw. The smoke is light and floral with moments of rich nuttiness that come in and out before a mostly floral finish. A medium-bodied smoke.

U.S.: \$10.35 U.K.: N/A

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, BRAZIL, PERU
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA AURORA PREFERIDOS 1903 EDICION EMERALD PERFECTO

A classic, Zeppelin-shaped perfecto with a heavy black pepper and mineral character. Hints of maple sweetness precede the mineral finish. Full bodied.

U.S.: \$20.00 U.K.: N/A

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: PERU
WRAPPER: PERU

LA LIBERTAD BOX-PRESSED TORPEDO

Tannish in color, this belicoso is evenly pressed and offers copious smoke on the draw. An initial floral character becomes earthy with carob, cocoa and coffee. A simple, straightforward smoke.

U.S.: \$6.50 U.K.: N/A

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF SPECIAL SERIES SHORT PERFECTO

A tan perfecto with an especially pointy nipple foot. The even draw imparts a touch of cardboard that settles to show some oat-like notes and a generic sweetness. The finish is musty.

U.S.: \$15.60 U.K.: N/A

86

miscellaneous

The fairly small brand Tierra Volcán scored 92 points with its Corto size, a short robusto packed with rich, interesting tobacco. It's owned by a company called Mombacho Cigars S.A. and made in Nicaragua at an old restored mansion converted into a rolling gallery. Unlike most of Nicaragua's premium cigar brands made in Estelí, Tierra Volcán's are produced in Grenada. Like a short pull of espresso, the Corto is an abbreviated size, but intense in its aroma, texture and range of flavors. The cigars in this category are either short versions of coronas or truncated robustos, and four of them scored 90 points, some of which only came to market last year. The Avo Syncro Nicaragua Short Robusto marks the first time that a regular-production Avo is box pressed and contains Nicaraguan tobacco. Also from Davidoff, the Davidoff Nicaragua Short Corona is the smallest iteration of this all-Nicaraguan blend. At only 3 1/2 inches long, the Cuban Montecristo Media Corona was intended to deliver impactful Montecristo taste in a short period of time. The Padilla Reserva Short Robusto is by far the bulkiest of the bunch with its 60 ring gauge.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

TIERRA VOLCÁN CORTO

A well-made robusto with a great colorado complexion. Notes of honeyed wood and mocha segue into an earthy finish with elements of cinnamon and cappuccino.
U.S.: \$7.95 U.K.: N/A

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA,
DOM. REP., PERU
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

AVO SYNCRO NICARAGUA SHORT ROBUSTO

This short, well-made cigar is sharply pressed, delivering rich layers of hearty smoke full of chocolate, cedar and coffee bean character.
U.S.: \$7.90 U.K.: N/A

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 3 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

DAVIDOFF NICARAGUA SHORT CORONA

Abundant amounts of dense, medium-bodied smoke layers the palate with woody, wheaty notes, mineral undertones and sweet coconut that continues on to the finish.
U.S.: \$10.30 U.K.: N/A

90



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 3 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2015

MONTECRISTO MEDIA CORONA

A short, well-rolled cigar crafted with a three-seam cap. The earthy, wheaty smoke also leaves impressions of coffee and a hint of graham cracker.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £10.06

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PADILLA RESERVA SHORT ROBUSTO

Short and fat with a darkish colorado wrapper. The smoke is meaty in texture, rich and sweet with notes of hickory and the sweet-and-sour quality of BBQ sauce.
U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A

90

**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ASYLUM PREMIUM 44X4

A toothy, oily little cigar with a three-seam cap and full, open draw. It's a brawny smoke with a sweet-and-spicy touch of ginger snap and sweet, French vanilla finish, but the smoke becomes muted leaving the palate a bit chalky.
U.S.: \$5.00 U.K.: N/A

89**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 3 1/4"
FILLER: BRAZIL, DOM. REP.
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF ESCURIO PETIT ROBUSTO

A short, attractive cigar with an easy draw and even burn. Warm, bready notes and earthy undertones lead to a salty, slightly papery finish.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A

89**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: HONDURAS
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

EIROA 48X4 PRENSADO

Tightly packed with a lot of tobacco, this box-pressed little cigar has a warm, baked pineapple note along with fresh tobacco notes, but the finish is dry.

U.S.: \$9.36 U.K.: N/A

89**CUBA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 3/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2015

PARTAGÁS SERIE D NO. 5

An abbreviated robusto with a flat head and three-seam cap. It's a tangy, cedary smoke with some cinnamon and floral notes the lead to an earthy finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £16.24

89**CUBA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: APRIL 2015

ROMEO Y JULIETA PETIT CHURCHILL

Floral and oaky from the first puff to the last with a flinty aftertaste. It's a medium-bodied smoke with an uneven burn and flaky white ash.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £15.12

89**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP., BRAZIL
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MACANUDO CRÜ ROYALE POCO GORDO

An ultra-squat robusto with a firm draw that delivers a tangy, woody smoke, some nuttiness and a dry finish. A medium-bodied cigar.

U.S.: \$5.49 U.K.: N/A

88**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

CAIN MADURO 460

This plug of a cigar has a firm draw but imparts a smoke laden with licorice notes, earth and spice. A touch of damp earth comes through on the finish. Medium to full bodied.

U.S.: \$7.51 U.K.: N/A

87**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 4 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL PETITE ROBUSTO

A blond little robusto with an airy draw. It forms a flaky ash as it burns, offering a grassy smoke that becomes faintly nutty with hints of earth.

U.S.: \$6.45 U.K.: N/A

87

petit coronas

The original Winston Churchill line by Davidoff had trouble finding an audience and failed to make much of an impression. Davidoff rebranded and rebled the line with a rather high-minded concept. The silhouette of Churchill appears within Davidoff's signature cameo-style band for a striking white-on-gold affect. Also, each size was meant to represent a different facet of the elder statesman. The Petit Corona, for example, is supposed to symbolize Churchill's artistic side. The once sleepy brand was reintroduced in 2014, and we were impressed by the results. The Petit Corona tied for best cigar of the category, scoring 92 points. The Cuban Punch Petit Coronation (Tubo) also scored 92 points. Once an extensive line full of myriad shapes, the Punch brand is now down to a handful of sizes, most of which tend to do very well in our tastings. These Petit Coronations come in handy aluminum tubes enameled in an attractive shade of pine green with a screw-cap at the bottom. The cigar offers a dynamic palette of flavors, all performing in harmony with equal parts boldness and elegance.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 41 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

**DAVIDOFF WINSTON CHURCHILL
PETIT CORONA**

The sweet aroma of molasses cookies that emanates from this cigar as it burns recurs on the palate, along with notes of espresso and savory wood.
U.S.: \$9.90 U.K.: N/A

92



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4 5/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2014

PUNCH PETIT CORONATION (TUBO)

Floral at first, the reddish-brown petit corona becomes hearty with undertones of coffee and earth. A bold but balanced little smoke.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £9.25

92



NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

OLIVA SERIE O NO. 4

Covered in a matter wrapper, this corona imparts a dense, chewy smoke full of rich mesquite, peppercorn notes and a sweet, baking spice finish. A pleasant, medium-bodied cigar.
U.S.: \$5.36 U.K.: N/A

91



NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA COLORADO PIKITO

A very strong little smoke that starts with a touch of acidity but shows a range of black pepper, rock salt and big earthy notes. There's a slightly sweet salted caramel note on the finish.
U.S.: \$5.40 U.K.: N/A

90



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JULY 2015

MONTECRISTO NO. 5

A medium-bodied little smoke with a firm draw. It's pleasantly sweet and bready with an array of cinnamon, baking spices and graham cracker.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £9.14

90

**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP.,
HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PUNCH LONDON CLUB

Bready and woody with an herbal element and a coffee-like finish. The draw is slightly firm, but delivers ample smoke.
U.S.: \$2.89 U.K.: N/A

90

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP.,
NICARAGUA, PERU
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

H. UPMANN VINTAGE CAMEROON PETITE CORONA

Draped in a veiny, toothy wrapper, this cigar is a bit rough in appearance, but offers a hearty smoke full of black pepper, tangy wood and leather notes before a sweet finish.
U.S.: \$5.70 U.K.: N/A

89

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 3/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

ASHTON CABINET SELECTION TRÉS PETITE

A profoundly toasty cigar that is surprisingly strong for such a little smoke. Notes of coffee bean and earth come in and out before a floral finish, but the toastiness remains.
U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A

88

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA FLOR DOMINICANA LIGERO OSCURO NATURAL CABINET L-200

An excessively oily robusto with dark wrapper and bumpy head. Initial waxy notes dissipate to show a heavy black peppercorn character along with touches of licorice and a strong, peppery finish.
U.S.: \$6.60 U.K.: N/A

87

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS,
COLOMBIA
BINDER: INDONESIA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VEGAFINA NO. 5 PERLA

The draw of this petit corona is ample, delivering an earthy smoke full of ground coffee notes and a mineral character redolent of pencil lead. The finish is wheaty and short.
U.S.: \$4.85 U.K.: N/A

87

**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROOM 101 DARUMA PAPI CHULO

A small, medium-bodied cigar that leans full with big cedar notes, some spice and a touch of butterscotch. An overly woody finish puts the smoke out of balance.
U.S.: \$6.75 U.K.: N/A

86

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

DAVIDOFF PURO D'ORO SUBLIMES

Leathery and spicy with plenty of cedar notes, this little cigar has an odd waxy aftertaste that lingers on the palate, affecting the score.
U.S.: \$10.90 U.K.: N/A

84

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., MEXICO
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

MACANUDO CAFÉ PETIT CORONA

A lightly hued petit corona that offers a mild to medium-bodied herbal smoke with hints of cedar and a papery finish.
U.S.: \$5.49 U.K.: N/A

84

robustos

Fans of nuanced tobacco and less heavy-handed blends will often choose the Cuban Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2. At 94 points, it was the highest scoring cigar of not only the robusto category, but the entire issue. While the cigar is not a particularly strong smoke, it is certainly rich and cohesive, able to communicate very clear, unmistakable impressions of favorable notes like honey and brown sugar. The Casa Fernandez Miami Aganorsa Leaf Maduro is the only cigar in this tasting rolled in the U.S.A. Made in Miami, the Robusto Extra scored 93 points for its stout backbone of earthy tones complemented by sweetness. It's a hearty smoke yet not at all overpowering.



CUBA

HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 2

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2015

A rich and nutty cigar that leaves clear, profound impressions of honey and brown sugar on the palate along with a warm, toasty undertone all of which meld on the finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £16.95

94



U.S.A.

CASA FERNANDEZ MIAMI AGANORSA LEAF MADURO ROBUSTO EXTRA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

The draw of this pressed robusto fills the mouth with a complex woody, earthy smoke that takes on sophisticated notes of nougat, toffee and semisweet chocolate.
U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A

93



NICARAGUA

ILLUSIONE ULTRA OP. NO. 4

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

A box-pressed robusto with a silky smooth wrapper. Its lush, full draw offers prominent notes of earth and walnut with a touch of espresso.
U.S.: \$8.95 U.K.: N/A

92



NICARAGUA

ROCKY PATEL SUN GROWN MADURO ROBUSTO

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

Sharply pressed with a dark, pristine, wrapper. Strong, earthy smoke underscores bittersweet chocolate notes along with vanilla bean and a caramel sweetness.
U.S.: \$8.60 U.K.: N/A

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ARTURO FUENTE ROSADO SUNGROWN MAGNUM R VITOLA "FORTY-FOUR"

RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

Subtly pressed with an oily, reddish-brown wrapper. This medium-bodied cigar offers vanilla bean, dried berries and leathery notes that lead to a mineral-dense finish.
U.S.: \$6.90 U.K.: N/A

91



CUBA

JUAN LOPEZ SELECCIÓN NO. 2

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2014

Bold and leathery, this robusto has an attractive Colorado wrapper and a flat head. Undertones of earth, nuts and sugar make it an enjoyable medium- to full-bodied cigar.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £16.29

91

**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CAO PILÓN ROBUSTO EXTRA

A beautiful reddish-brown robusto gleaming with oils. The smoke is a medium-bodied combination of the sweet and savory, offering salty, earthy notes balanced by vanilla bean and gingerbread.
U.S.: \$6.50 U.K.: N/A

90**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

TATUAJE HAVANA VI VEROCÚ NO. 4

Draped in a dark and toothy wrapper, this gleaming robusto has a firm draw that delivers big notes of licorice and vanilla bean before a nutty finish.
U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A

90**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

JOYA RED ROBUSTO

A woody, medium-bodied robusto with notes of honey and baking spices. The draw is lush, offering the right amount of resistance, and the burn produces a white ash.
U.S.: \$5.75 U.K.: N/A

89**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA IMPERIOSA MAGICOS

Nearly perfect in appearance, this oaky, earthy cigar has a spicy, herbal element to the medium-bodied smoke. Notes of Vanilla bean, anise and mint become muddled on the finish.
U.S.: \$8.75 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

MONTECRISTO CLASSIC ROBUSTO

There's a notably firm draw to this medium-bodied robusto. First puffs have the briny quality of green olives. The smoke carries notes of black pepper and oak, though the finish is a bit musty.
U.S.: \$10.95 U.K.: N/A

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

DIAMOND CROWN ROBUSTO NO. 5

A mild, creamy cigar with soft notes of sandalwood and coffee, and a mild citrus finish. The cigar dons a blonde wrapper and burns evenly.
U.S.: \$11.25 U.K.: N/A

87**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MURCIELAGO NOIR

Topped with a scaly, sloppy cap, this cigar begins earthy and peppery with a sweet anise note, but the finish becomes slightly bitter.
U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A

87**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 55 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., U.S.A./PENN.
BROADLEAF, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

GURKHA HERITAGE ROBUSTO

Initial puffs of this cigar are notably strong and charry. Notes of leather try to come through but are overwhelmed by the heavy charcoal character of the smoke.
U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A

85

Cigars are listed first by country and then by score. Please refer to the main tasting pages for notes and prices.

CIGAR AFICIONADO'S 100-POINT SCALE

Classic	95–100
Outstanding	90–94
Very good to excellent	80–89
Average to good commercial quality	70–79
Don't waste your money	60–69
Not available	n/a
<i>Note: all prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.</i>	

CUBA

- 94 Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2
- 92 Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo)
- 92 Punch Petit Coronation (Tubo)
- 92 Romeo y Julieta Pirámides Añejados
- 91 Juan Lopez Selección No. 2
- 91 Ramon Allones Sur Exclusivo Líbano
- 90 Montecristo Media Corona
- 90 Montecristo No. 5
- 89 Partagás Serie D No. 5
- 89 Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchill
- 88 H. Upmann Magnum 56 Edición Limitada 2015

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- 93 Ashton Symmetry Prestige
- 92 Davidoff Winston Churchill Petit Corona
- 92 La Palina Red Label Toro
- 91 Aging Room Small Batch M356ii Mezzo
- 91 Arturo Fuente Hemingway Short Story Maduro
- 91 Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R Vitola "Forty-Four"
- 91 Flores y Rodriguez 10th Anniversary Reserva Limitada Figurado
- 91 Partagas 1845 Extra Fuerte Robusto Gordo
- 90 Avo Syncro Nicaragua Short Robusto
- 90 Davidoff Nicaragua Short Corona
- 90 Montecristo 80th Anniversary No. 2
- 89 Davidoff Escurio Petit Robusto
- 89 H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon Petite Corona
- 89 Nat Sherman 1930 Inmenso
- 88 Ashton Cabinet Selection Trés Petite
- 88 Cohiba Churchill
- 88 Hammer + Sickle Moscow City Double Robusto
- 88 Kristoff Cameroon Matador
- 88 La Aurora Preferidos 1903 Edicion Emerald Perfecto
- 88 La Gloria Cubana Churchill
- 88 La Libertad Box-Pressed Torpedo
- 88 Macanudo Crü Royale Poco Gordo
- 88 Montecristo Classic Robusto
- 88 Romeo y Julieta 1875 Churchill
- 88 Ted's Farris 5 1/2 x 56
- 87 Diamond Crown Robusto No. 5
- 87 E.P. Carrillo Selección Oscuro Dinamicos
- 87 La Flor Dominicana Ligero Oscuro Natural Cabinet L-200
- 87 Montecristo White Vintage Connecticut Double Corona

- 87 Romeo y Julieta Reserva Real Petite Robusto
- 87 VegaFina No. 5 Perla
- 86 Davidoff Special Series Short Perfecto
- 84 Davidoff Puro d'Oro Sublimes
- 84 Macanudo Cafe Petit Corona

HONDURAS

- 91 Rocky Patel Sun Grown Torpedo
- 90 Placeres Reserva Colosos
- 90 Punch London Club
- 89 Alec Bradley Tempus Nicaragua Centuria
- 89 Eiroa 48x4 Prensado
- 86 Camacho Ecuador Churchill
- 86 Room 101 Daruma Papi Chulo

MEXICO

- 90 Casa Turrent 1901 Torpedo

NICARAGUA

- 93 El Centurion H-2K-CT Toro Box Pressed
- 92 Enclave Churchill
- 92 Illusione Ultra Op. No. 4
- 92 Rocky Patel Sun Grown Maduro Robusto
- 92 Tierra Volcán Corto
- 91 Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado Torpedo
- 91 La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Belicoso
- 91 Oliva Serie O No. 4
- 91 Padrón Serie 1926 No. 1
- 90 CAO Pilón Robusto Extra
- 90 Casa Magna Colorado Pikito
- 90 Casa Magna D. Magnus II Caligula
- 90 Padilla Reserva Short Robusto
- 90 Tatuaje Havana VI Verocú No. 4
- 89 Asylum Premium 44x4
- 89 Flor del Valle Gran Valle
- 89 Joya Red Robusto
- 89 Padrón Dámaso No. 15
- 88 Herrera Esteli Piramide Fino
- 88 La Imperiosa Magicos
- 87 Cain Maduro 460
- 87 Murcielago Noir
- 86 CAO Gold Churchill
- 85 Gurkha Heritage Robusto

U.S.A.

- 93 Casa Fernandez Miami Aganorsa Leaf Maduro Robusto Extra
- 88 Don Pepin Garcia Original Delicias

HNB

GOLD & CLASSIC

These Premium cigars are full-bodied and well balanced. Each draw provides a rich smoke that is robust and flavorful yet so smooth and creamy with a pronounced nuttiness resulting from the complex blending of only the finest Nicaraguan tobacco. The **HNB CLASSIC** line boasts of its fine Ecuadorian-grown wrapper in Connecticut shade while the **HNB GOLD** line is elegantly finished with premium Habano wrappers. Both blends have pig-tail caps and are enclosed at the foot to lock-in their premium tobacco filler freshness along with their distinct flavor and aroma.



ENJOY THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

www.natcicco.com



connoisseur's corner

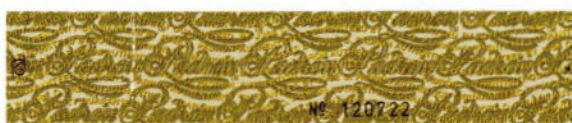
A 40-something-year-old Davidoff named after one of the legendary wineries of Bordeaux. A Padrón created especially for the Millennium celebration 15 years ago. An immense Cuban Partagás rolled the year before CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine began publishing. What do these three very different cigars have in common? Each rated a near-perfect 98 points in our latest tasting of vintage cigars. ■ Every cigar was superb, but each had its own identity. The elder statesman of the group, the Davidoff, has mellowed over time, a forgivable circumstance that hasn't harmed its flavor. The Padrón seemed at its prime, 16 years young and brimming with life. The Partagás Lusitania—dark as a bar of Valrhona—still has plenty of character despite being some 24 years old.



DAVIDOFF CHÂTEAU HAUT-BRION (CIRCA 1970)

This is a Cuban Davidoff made in the early 1970s. The cigar is over 40 years old, and shows an amazing amount of flavor and character. Mellowed a bit with age, so it is creamy on the palate, but with a solid core of cedar and spiciness all the way through to the long finish. A perfect small, full-bodied cigar. —*Gordon Mott*

98



PADRÓN MILLENNIUM (1999)

A box-pressed beauty that comes from the Padrón's personal collection, and not banded with the traditional Millennium band, which is individually numbered. It's an amazing cigar, with an effortless draw and a perfect burn. The smoke has chocolate and vanilla highlights around a core of savory wood, with a finish that goes on and on. A perfectly balanced cigar with immense amounts of flavor and many years of life remaining. —*David Savona*

98



PARTAGÁS LUSITANIA (1991)

With a wrapper as dark as night, this stately double corona promises to deliver power and flavor, and it doesn't disappoint. It has a rich, chocolaty character, with plenty of molasses as well. Notes of earthy tea and savory wood buttress the considerable sweetness, which turns into milk chocolate as the big cigar is slowly turned to ash. A brilliant smoke that has plenty of youthful vigor remaining despite its age. —*David Savona*

98



LA GLORIA CUBANA SABROSOS (1994)

An elegant lonsdale with a gorgeous, light-brown wrapper and picture-perfect construction. Spending over 20 years in a dress box has given these lonsdales a distinct, box-pressed appearance. It's quite mellow, with a honeyed wood character and a sweetness faintly reminiscent of Sauternes. The finish is rather dry. —*David Savona*

93



BOLIVAR CORONA GIGANTE (1993)

After all these years, the wrapper of this Churchill is still oily, supple and silky to the touch. The big cigar is a slow starter, showing a bit of a dustiness at first, but it gradually warms up to impart a touch of earth, hints of cinnamon and some raisin notes. No longer the earthy powerhouse it was as a youngster, the cigar remains sweet and enjoyable with perfect combustion and a creamy texture to the smoke. —*Gregory Mottola*

92



PARTAGÁS SHORT (2003)

Box pressed and petit, with a silky smooth wrapper. The first few puffs are powerful, showing a big tobacco core, full of leather and meaty notes. It takes on hints of almonds and rock salt, with woody vanilla, while showing an earthy aroma, with a sweet brown sugar quality. The cigar gains intensity with every puff, yet remains balanced. —*Andrew Nagy*

92

A CUBA CIGAR JOURNEY

Cigars, Cars, Rum & More

The 'Bucket List' trip for every cigar enthusiast!



Premier World Discovery is one of the largest producing tour operators for American travelers to legally visit Cuba and now also offers the *ultimate cigar experience*.

Trip Highlights: Vinales Valley & Pinar del Rio • Robaina Tobacco Plantation Tour • Tobacco Farmhouse Visit • La Corona Cigar Factory Tour
• 5th Ave Havana Cigar Shop • Havana Club Rum Museum Tour & Tasting • Private Cigar Rolling Demonstrations • Humidor Factory Tour
• Vintage American Car Ride • Old Havana Tour • Museum of the Revolution • Hemingway's Farm • Nacional Hotel Tour & Much More...

Trip Inclusions: Airfare, First Class Hotels & Transportation, Cuban Travel Visa, Admissions, Experienced Local Cuban Guide and More...

Space is limited. Monthly departures.



BOOK NOW! Call toll free **877.953.8687**

Visit www.cubacigarjourney.com for trip details



Can't Get Enough Cigar News?

Satisfy Your Insatiable Desire With
Two Online Newsletters From the Editors of
cigar
aficionado

Cigar Insider

DECEMBER 1, 2015 • VOL. 20, NO. 23 • FROM THE PUBLISHER OF CIGAR AFICIONADO MAGAZINE

CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE

IN THIS ISSUE:

TASTING REPORT:

VERTICAL BRAND TASTINGS:

- Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado [page 2]
- Tatuaje Havana VI Verocú [page 3]

NEW RELEASE:

- Henry Clay Tattoo Toro [page 2]

NEW SIZE:

- Romeo y Julieta Cedros de Luxe [page 3]

CIGAR NEWS

- The Most Expensive My Father Cigar [page 4]
- Limited Inventory in Havana Shops [page 4]
- Matilde Moves to Santiago [page 5]
- Paló Cutters Acquired by Quality Importers [page 5]
- Davidoff Opens Cigar Bar on Vegas Strip [page 5]
- Nicaraguan Cigar Festival Kicks Off New Year [page 6]
- ProCigar to Hold Eighth Festival in Dominican Republic [page 6]
- Habanos Fest Celebrates 30 Years of Cohiba [page 7]
- Cigars for the Troops [page 7]
- Big Smoke Schedule [page 8]

FEATURED CIGAR

HENRY CLAY TATTOO TORO

DOM. REP. • PRICE: \$9.50 • BODY: MED. TO FULL
For a full tasting, see page two.

92
POINTS

BEST CIGARS THIS ISSUE

Henry Clay Tattoo Toro	Dom. Rep.	92
Romeo y Julieta Cedros de Luxe	Cuba	92
Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado Torpedo	Nicaragua	91
Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado Bajito	Nicaragua	90
Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado Churchill	Nicaragua	90
Alec Bradley Nica Puro Rosado Toro	Nicaragua	90
Tatuaje Havana VI Verocú No. 4	Nicaragua	90
Tatuaje Havana VI Verocú No. 9	Nicaragua	90



A SEASON OF FESTIVALS
CIGAR FESTIVALS ABOUND IN WINTER
and span Nicaragua, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
All are cultural excursions into the world of premium cigars, where manufacturers open their fields and factories to enthusiasts from around the world. See this issue for details on all three events.



BIG SMOKE IN THE BIG APPLE

IF BIG SMOKE VEGAS WAS TOO FAR AWAY, THERE'S STILL NEW YORK.

This Thursday, Pier 92—an event space on the west side of Manhattan—will welcome cigar smokers from New York City and the metropolitan area to light up en masse for the city's largest smoking party of the year. For one night, cigar lovers will be able to partake in the gentlemanly pastime of premium smoking while interacting with some of the biggest cigar manufacturers in the business. The festivities begin at 6 p.m., and by the time they end at 9:30 p.m., each attendee will walk out with more than 30 premium cigars. For more details on this week's Big Smoke New York, see cigaraficionado.com.

TO SUBSCRIBE GO TO WWW.CIGARINSIDER.COM

cigar aficionado NEWS WATCH

December 8, 2015

Subscribe to this FREE e-newsletter



Featured Cigar: Diamond Crown Maximus Toro No. 4 (90 Points)

J.C. Newman's Maximus line, which features a dark wrapper from Ecuador, is a fuller-bodied offshoot of the core Diamond Crown brand. In December's Cigar Aficionado, the Toro No. 4 (6 inches, 50 ring gauge, \$13.75) impressed our panel with its easy draw, creamy smoke and combination of earth, leather, graham cracker and raisin sweetness.

Diamond Crown Ratings

Peruse Our Tasting Database

Charity Cigars For The U.S. Military

Tobacco, the age-old tradition of smoking a perfect cigar are meeting with a less traditional partner: social media. And with an estimated 14 million service members in the United States Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy, two organizations are sending thousands of cigars annually to boost morale and show support. Operation Deployed and Cigars for Warriors each take a different approach, but aim for the same end: providing cigars for American military who are a long way from home.



Full Story Here



THIS ISSUE SPONSORED BY Freyja: Freyja is Emma Viktorsson's first own blend under Las Cumbres Tabaquero, made in the DR. The name represents the bridge between her Swedish roots and the "Cigar-Countries." Blend: DR Criollo '98 wrapper, Mexican San Andres binder, filler: DR Criollo '98, Photo Culebro and Nicaragua Estelí. Four sizes: MSRP from \$7-10. Visit us at lscubros.com

Cigar Aficionado's Big Smoke New York

Nearly 1,200 cigar enthusiasts descended upon Manhattan's west side last Thursday, all uniting in good company for Cigar Aficionado's Big Smoke—New York's largest celebration of cigars and the good life. Check out all the action in our photo gallery.

Big Smoke New York Slide Show

Big Smoke Las Vegas Slide Show

A Snapshot Of Havana Cigar Shop Inventories

Senior contributing editor Gordon Mott recently traveled to Havana, Cuba for the annual Friends of Partagás festival. While there, he visited four of the city's more notable La Casa del Habano cigar shops—Hotel Habana Libre, Meliá Habana, Hotel Nacional, 5th Avenida y 16—and recorded what he found in their humidor. Many shopkeepers reported low stocks of one particularly popular brand: Cohiba Behike.

Click For More Details

Review: Lotus Jaws Cutter With Serrated Blades

When The Lotus Group debuted its new Jaws cutter with serrated blades at this year's International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers trade show, it seemed like yet another cigar accessories gimmick. But after much testing, we discovered the saw-toothed edges of the Jaws are no scheme, but consistently cut with precision and a noticeable smoothness.

More Details

Cigar Accessories Review Index

Cigar Pairing: Angel's Envy Cask Strength 2015

Senior features editor and spirits guru Jack Bettridge takes the third-annual edition of this cask-strength Bourbon from Louisville Distilling Co. The spirit is finished in Portwine casks, vatted in a single batch and comes in at a scorching 127.5 proof. He pairs it with a Joya de Nicaragua Cuatro Cinco Reserva Especial Torpedo.

Full Tasting Here

Drinks Pairing Index

JOIN US:



WHAT'S COMING UP

December 14: Top 25 Best Cigars of 2015 Reveal Begins
December 22: Cigar Insider is Published
December 29: Your Next Issue of News Watch is Released

Go to CigarAficionado.com to Sign Up Today

LIFE AFTER NO.1

**An Interview with Alan Rubin
of Alec Bradley Cigars**

portraits by Jeffery Salter

Alan Rubin, owner of Alec Bradley cigars, in his warehouse in Dania, Florida.

JANUARY 6, 2012, 10 A.M.
A button is pressed in New York City and a copper, gold and blue cigar band appears on the screens of a waiting world. A minute later the phones begin to ring in the Dania, Florida, headquarters of Alec Bradley cigars. The small company's Alec Bradley Prensado Churchill has just been named Cigar of the Year by CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine and everyone seems to want one. Nothing will ever be the same again.

Orders flood in for the box-pressed smoke, which receives a rating of 96 points. Alec Bradley's owner, Alan Rubin, is overjoyed. His sales boom,

going up more than 70 percent in a single year. But as 2012 draws to a close he discovers a problem while he is handing out one of his award-winning smokes to a consumer. The cigar is soft, almost unsmokeable. And it is not alone.

Rubin's discovery exposed production flaws throughout much of his product line, and set him on a difficult path to regain the quality of his product and the trust of the consumer. Rubin sat down recently in New York City with executive editor David Savona for a frank and detailed discussion about what went wrong with his cigars and how he and his company addressed the problem.



Alec Bradley
Prensado
Churchills, Cigar of
the Year for 2011.

Savona: Let's talk about your Alec Bradley Prensado Churchill, which was named CIGAR AFICIONADO'S Cigar of the Year for 2011. The highest accolade we give. Ninety-six-point rating, fantastic rating. But it wasn't all roses after that. Things happened.

Rubin: Yes. Let me give you a few years prior. Seven years prior to us getting the No. 1, we had grown about 22 to 25 percent a year, year over year, for about seven years.

Q: That's extraordinary.

A: At one point I was very happy. I felt that we were one of the fastest growing cigar companies in the world. Everything was going very nicely, and we were building a reputation, but truth be told I think a lot of cigar smokers still didn't

know who Alec Bradley was. Even with that type of growth. The people who really knew cigars knew the brand. We had gotten some great ratings, [on] Tempus and Select Cabinet Reserve, and we started to get some level of credibility and people started to pick us up. And we were very comfortable in that manageable level of growth. We had good goals, and we knew how to manage those goals.

Q: How many cigars were you making before you were named Cigar of the Year?

A: We were doing just over three million [units]. And we were probably approaching the four million mark. We had a lot of work to do, to get people to know who we were, but it was fun. It was exciting, and it was truly a great journey. We were seeing levels of success and that always propels me and a company to want to do more. It was great. We had our problems, like every other company. We still had some growing problems, knowing who to hire, making sure we had the right tobaccos, we spent a lot of time down at the factories, there every four weeks, five weeks, blending, looking over production—and then things changed.

Q: So what changed?

A: Everything changed. Earning Cigar of the Year didn't change who we were, and it didn't change who we were as a company, but it changed how we did business. I think one of the reasons is people liked our small company feel and small company mentality, and the fact that we considered the consumers our friends and the tobacconists our friends. It's very personal for me. Business is very personal for me. And then you get this accolade of the No. 1 cigar and overnight people's perceptions changed.

Q: How so?

A: With Alec Bradley, even with those little bits of success, we were kind of flying under the radar, as a company. And then the first week in January of 2012 you're now firmly implanted in the center of the radar screen. People want to know who you are and what you're about. I just personally did not manage the demands that were put on us, and the expectations, the perception of who we were. I did a poor job in managing that. As well as other things.

Q: Tell me specifically what happened.

A: Right after it was announced, I think it was

10 o'clock in the morning, at 10:01 the phones started ringing off the hook. You know, we find out at the same time as everyone else. I go on the Internet like everyone else. You can't prepare for this. It's not like I have six months of inventory that we've rolled waiting. It doesn't work that way. People were calling, friends that I had, and they would call and say 'Give me 25 boxes of Prensado Churchill.' And the truth is if they called at the end of the day we were basically out of inventory. As soon as I said no they said 'You're not the same company you used to be. I thought we were friends.' I'm never one to want to say no, I always want to say yes. I didn't want to say no. I overpromised. And I hurt a lot of people. And the truth is, we burdened the factory. In that one year we grew 72 percent. Unmanageable. And we put demands on the factory and we didn't have the processes in place.

Q: Was that growth all Prensado?

A: No. It had an effect on the entire company. Across all the lines. If you look at how that translates back, we had to dedicate a lot of our production to Prensado. So, therefore, the other brands began to suffer. I had to take production from other products that we had in our portfolio to try and take care of my friends that were looking for the product.

Q: How many accounts did you have before being named Cigar of the Year?

A: Solid accounts, probably 1,100. And most of them I had met personally, so they could make a phone call. And where I used to get back to somebody in a day, sometimes it was two weeks before I could call somebody back. And where I used to be down at the factory every four or five weeks, the requests to get me on the road and going in the stores and talking about the product kept me traveling more domestically. I took my eye off the ball. At the factory is where I needed to be.

Q: You made more Prensados. Did the product begin to suffer?

A: Yes. Again, we were now managing relationships. And expectations. And we were failing there. But where we really failed, there was a period of time—probably from mid-2012 for the next year and a half—we realized we didn't have some processes in place. We were making some bad cigars that were making it to the

It's Still Your Father's Drink. Now It's Yours Too.



Go to **WhiskyAdvocate.com** to subscribe or give a gift.

Planning to attend a 2016 WhiskyFest event?
Go to **WhiskyFest.com** for schedule and ticket information.



COOKING
CHANNEL

SOBEWFF

PRESENTED BY FOOD&WINE

Celebrating
15
years

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

SOBEFEST.COM | 877.762.3933 | **PREFERRED CARD**

FEBRUARY 24-28, 2016

FEATURING

DANIEL BOULUD	NIGELLA LAWSON	JEAN-GEORGES VONGERICHTEN
DARIO CECCHINI	NOBU MATSUHISA	JONATHAN WAXMAN
ALAIN DUCASSE	JOËL ROBUCHON	& MANY MORE
TYLER FLORENCE	MARTHA STEWART	

TITLE



PRESENTING

FOOD & WINE

BENEFITING



HOSTED BY



HOST HOTEL



PREMIER



OFFICIAL AIRLINE



PLATINUM



MIAMI BEACH

MODERN LUXURY
MIAMI



DIAMOND



SPECIAL THANKS



Confirmed sponsors as of October 2015

marketplace. It was kind of a perfect storm. The cigars were made [under contract] at Raices Cubanás, and we take the majority of the production there. The owner, Romay Endemaño, had just taken ill, probably a year, year and a half before. And his son Hugo came in. All of a sudden I'm putting another two million cigars into production, and they couldn't handle it. Hugo didn't have the experience at the time. Romay wasn't on the floor running production. So when things were going wrong, we didn't know how to fix it. We did everything we could to work on it, but we didn't know how to fix the problem. Romay was the guy, but medical issues came up and he couldn't be there.

I think I made one statement that made some poor changes to our production: I said: 'The cigars have to perform well, they have to draw well.'

Q: Seems like it makes sense.

A: Yeah, but that translation was "Don't overfill them." So we had cigars that weren't burning properly, we had cigars that were underfilled, and those were kind of mixed in. We didn't know that all that was happening because I was on the road traveling, Ralph [Montero] who is my partner, was managing the operation. And we got caught. That's when the train kind of derailed.

Q: When and how did you realize something was going wrong with the production of Prensado?

A: It wasn't just Prensado. That mentality was across a lot of lines.

Q: At this point was Raices making more than just Prensado for you?

A: Yes, Family Blend, SCR, Tempus, Tempus Maduro. It's a handmade product, and we built our reputation based on what we put into the market. Every now and then you'd get an e-mail that said, hey, I had an experience where something didn't burn properly. Then we started to notice that percentage was greater. We were getting too many complaints. And then one night I was at an event, and I went to hand a guy a cigar, and it was soft. And at that moment you say we really have a problem.

Q: Was it a number of cigars in that batch?

A: I went back the next day, and I started opening up boxes in our warehouse. They were soft.

Rubin's production soared after being named Cigar of the Year, and the product's quality suffered as a result.



Q: How many?

A: A lot.

Q: Was there draw testing going on?

A: Yes, and that was also part of the problem at some level. Because Romay was not there to help guide certain things, they said let's bring the number on the tester down, and that will be the acceptable range. And never really said anything to me, they just didn't want them to draw tight. We had a nightmare on our hands.

I think what hurts the most, is that we have so many loyal consumers, people who believe in us, who know who we are, and yet I let them down. I personally feel like I let them down.

Q: So you have the problem with production, rolling them too loose, but what about tobacco? Was that being rushed?

A: The one thing about cigars, you need time to smoke them but you [also] need time to make them. They felt like hey, if we can speed up the process, we will get the same result. Things were

just running through the system a little too quickly. We were still putting a nice amount of good product in the marketplace. I would go online and I would read: I really liked the flavor but it didn't burn, and people would say Alec Bradley products are inconsistent. They weren't being malicious. They were being honest.

Q: The ones we smoked when we made it cigar of the year: dead even burn, beautiful wrapper, flavor was extraordinary. You don't get a 96-point rating from CIGAR AFICIONADO without the cigar kicking ass—and you don't get cigar of the year without kicking ass again and again. It's the tournament of champions. It has to perform over and over.

A: We had the processes in place for that amount of production. But you add another two million cigars into production overnight, whatever little thing goes wrong becomes a big thing.

Q: What was your change in production?

A: We went from just under four million units to over six million.

Q: Cigar of the Year was named in January that year. When was the event when you noticed the soft cigar?

A: That was at the end of 2012. November, December of that year. At that point, you have a decision to make. Do I pull everything off and at some level almost go out of business? Or do I figure out how to work it out and manage it and do damage control? So I chose B. If someone calls with a complaint, we would send five cigars—but even then, the five cigars I was sending, I didn't know if those five cigars were right. So there weren't a lot of options, except to try to make things right. At one point we started rejecting shipments. We would be out of inventory, but we weren't going to put more bad cigars into the marketplace.

Q: What did you do?

A: We'd inspect—down there [in Honduras]. We tried to go down there and inspect. We weren't there as much as we needed to be.

Q: How often would they send you a shipment?

A: At that point it was every four or five weeks, we were getting containers in. And then we would inspect when it got to our warehouse. There were times when we smoked through sizes and we spot-checked things and I rejected entire shipments.

Q: How many cigars in a shipment?

A: Some of those shipments were 180,000 or 200,000 cigars. And you don't know if maybe they're a little moist, or they're underfilled. So we ended up buying these high-end humidity gauges to test the humidity of the cigar. There were a lot of questions and there weren't enough answers.

Q: Were retailers calling you with complaints?

A: Yes. And there's a long tail on that animal. It doesn't go away when you start making good cigars again. Now we are coming into 2013 and we realize we have a problem but we don't necessarily have a solution. We started spending more time [in Honduras] and really questioning every process. And sometimes there's a language barrier, in terms of the interpretation. Communication was tough.

Q: So what did you do?

A: We literally went down and questioned every single process, from fertilization in

planting to the drying, the fermentation, the tobacco preparation, all the way through what was making it onto the floor. Was the moisture content right? We put additional quality control pieces in place, we got rid of supervisors, more supervisors, better training, we spent a lot of time retooling. But that had to come from the heart. You had to care about everybody.

Q: It was like a detective process.

A: We literally questioned every part of the process.

Q: You started this at the beginning of 2013. How long until you trusted the factory again?

A: Around the middle of 2014, I'm spot-checking cigars. And I kind of realize just to myself, 'These cigars are good, they're burning

"When your kids' names are on the business, there's pressure. I want to leave the right legacy for my kids."

perfectly, the ash is holding on, they tasted great and they performed great.' It was getting better all along, but mid-2014 I was like, 'We got it.' This is who we are, this is who we were. I turned to Ralph and I said, 'We're back.' This is what these cigars are supposed to taste like.

Q: What kind of damage was done to the company in the interim?

A: People lost confidence in us. And rightfully so. And by the way all this falls on me. At the end, I'm the one who has to answer for those problems that we had. I believe success is a team game, but the mistakes and the failures we had really fall on me. I just didn't see it. I took my eye off the ball. It was our attention to detail prior that helped us grow as we did.

Q: And sales?

A: The year 2014 was a little bit down for us. Not much. We made it up in other areas. We still had cigars—Black Market, Tempus Maduro,

American Classic, Sun Grown—that were performing. People still had great experiences. It wasn't every cigar that we put out. There were pieces. It was enough of our portfolio that people got turned off. We had consumers tell us for awhile I was having trouble with your cigars, but now I taste the difference.

Q: Raices Cubanas still makes Prensado for you and many other cigars. When you went through these issues, did you ever think of leaving Raices Cubanas?

A: Nope.

Q: Why not?

A: Because the Endemaño family is my family. Their intent was not to do bad things. Their intent was to do great things. They never walked out on me once. They never said we're looking at other business and we don't need this. They said let's get through this together.

Q: You once said your cigars represent that one hour of someone's leisure time.

A: Best hour of their day. We want to be a part of the best hour of their day. So look back—I was not in a good place. That one hour they were giving to me and I wasn't giving back. It wasn't so extreme. Our production went down some, not a lot. People stuck by us.

Q: Do you have confidence in your product again?

A: I do. I couldn't sit here and do this if the cigars weren't right. All the great things that getting Cigar of the Year gives you—I gave you all the stuff that went wrong, but we're now in 35 countries outside of the United States.

Q: How many were you in before No. 1?

A: Three or four. As a company, as a brand, as a global brand, we're growing. Without being on the radar screen from getting No. 1, it never would have happened. And it made us better. It made us better because, for us to do the right thing, we had to get better.

When your kids' names are on the business, there's a little more pressure. And not just from my wife either. I want to leave the right legacy for my kids, if they choose to come into this business. Alec is currently working with me and I think Bradley wants to when he gets out of college. So I had to make this right. I had to fix this. I didn't have a choice. ♦

WhiskyFest

The longest running and best attended whisky festival in North America

Take Advantage of Early Bird Pricing

**EARLY BIRD
ENDS 1/31/16
ORDER NOW!**

WASHINGTON, DC

Marriott Marquis | 6:30 – 9:30 pm

March 2, 2016

**NEW
CITY!**

SOLD OUT

CHICAGO

Hyatt Regency | 6:30 – 9:30 pm

March 18, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO

Marriott Marquis | 6:30 – 9:30 pm

September 23, 2016

NEW YORK

Marriott Marquis | 6:30 – 9:30 pm

November 1, 2016

- Taste from a selection of more than 350 whiskies from around the world
- Meet the distillers and master blenders who make them
- Enjoy a gourmet buffet all evening
- Attend in-depth seminars by whisky experts

Sponsored by
Whisky
ADVOCATE



Tickets on sale now!

Visit whiskyfest.com or call 800-514-3849
to order your tickets.

	Full Price	Early Bird*
VIP	\$345	\$295
Regular ...	\$275	\$245

\$4 handling charge per ticket. A per order fee of \$4.50 applies to all telephone orders.

* Early bird pricing available through January 31, 2016 for Washington, DC and Chicago; June 30, 2016 for San Francisco and New York.



Cuba's American Plan

The leaders of Habanos S.A. tell CIGAR AFICIONADO about a long-term strategy for the U.S. market BY GORDON MOTT



The copresidents of Habanos S.A.: Luis Sánchez Harguindey (left) and Inocente Núñez Blanco are developing a gameplan for the day when Cuban cigars can be sold in the United States.

For the last 55 years, Cuba's cigar company has focused on the rest of the world, not the United States. Despite ignoring their northern neighbor on an official level, illegal shipments of millions of cigars provided ample evidence of the potential market across the Florida Straits.

December 17, 2014 changed everything. President Obama's announcement of a diplomatic initiative to restore normal relations with Cuba, and the expansion of legal travel opportunities for Americans there, triggered the conversation that had been on hold since 1962. If the U.S. government was moving toward normalization, it meant that the prospect of the trade embargo's end was a reality, and for Habanos S.A., the country's cigar monopoly, there was no time to waste.

For Habanos copresidents Inocente Núñez Blanco and Luis Sánchez Harguindey, the time is now.

"We are preparing. We are preparing the agricultural side. We are preparing the industrial side," says Núñez Blanco, who was named copresident in February.

"We saw the announcement as a very positive one," says Sánchez

Harguindey, who has been copresident since 2012. "We don't know when [the end of the trade embargo] is going to happen, nor can we speculate. But it is a great opportunity to have access to a market that makes up two-thirds of the world market for premium cigars. We do believe in a very short period of time we can capture 20 to 25 percent of that market. We are excited about the possibilities."

While the executives declined to give exact details of their preparations, they spoke in general terms during a November interview in Havana.

"This year, we are increasing the acreage that is being planted in tobacco," says Núñez Blanco. "We are expanding mostly in traditional areas where tobacco has been grown before, and we are recovering farmland for tobacco production." He also said there is a big investment in agricultural technology for farmers, who are being given an unspecified incentive to take part in the program. "Our focus is in Pinar del Río, but we are also expanding plantings in the central region of the

country so we can achieve the guarantee of both higher quantities of tobacco and higher quality," says Núñez Blanco, adding that the government is also trying to encourage new farmers to start planting tobacco.

The expansion program includes training new rollers and creating new factories dedicated to the production of premium cigars. The executives declined to say how many new factories would be built, nor would reveal how many factories are dedicated to premium cigars in Cuba today.

"It is all part of our development project," says Núñez Blanco. "Not just for production but for the benefit of the entire tobacco industry."

The potential reopening of the U.S. market also raises several other questions. When asked whether Cuba is considering new brand names that do not have trademark conflicts in the United States, Núñez Blanco says: "We are thinking about everything, from zero to 1,000, everything."

The copresidents reject any notion that Cuban cigar tobacco would become available to producers in other countries after the embargo ends. "No. That will never happen," says Núñez Blanco. "That is not part of our strategy, nor is it part of our thinking."

One piece of good news, at least at this point in the growing season, is that the 2015–2016 harvest appears to be on schedule. Núñez Blanco says that in most parts of Cuba plantings had been done ahead of schedule. Other sources told CIGAR AFICIONADO that there had been some problems—and some replanting—due to heavy rains in late October, but the copresidents say that was never a widespread problem, and in fact farmers in most areas completed their planting early.

The positive agricultural report is important because Cuba continues to suffer from a shortage of tobacco, especially higher-grade tobaccos. Superpremium cigars, like the Cohiba Behike series and Hoyo de Monterrey Double Coronas were in short supply, or totally absent from retail shelves, in Havana in November, due in part to very bad harvests in 2012–13, 2013–14, and a small harvest in the most recent growing season, 2014–15.

“We do have a momentary shortage of tobacco,” Núñez Blanco admits. “But we are trying to minimize it and find solutions, especially in regards to the balance in the market between our Ediciones Regionales [Regional Editions] and our traditional brands.”

Sánchez Harguindey suggests that the tobacco shortages complicated the delivery of some of the special cigars that Habanos produces every year, such as Edición Limitadas. “We are trying to increase efficiencies and productivity to get things to market when we announce them,” he says. Cigar smokers have been awaiting the third Edición Limitada for 2015, the Hoyo de Monterrey Maravilla (9 inches long by 55 ring gauge), which should ship by the time this issue is on sale, according to the executives. The other two ELs, the H. Upmann Magnum 56 (88 points, see page 129) and the Ramon Allones Club Allones (92 points, *Cigar Insider*) arrived at tobacconists toward the end of last summer.

Several other special-production cigars revealed at the 2015 Festival del Habano were not yet available in the world’s cigar shops as this issue went to press. Those include the Montecristo 80th Aniversario and the 2015 Gran Reserva, a Romeo y Julieta Wide Churchill Cosecha 2009.

The copresidents were coy about the plans for Cohiba in 2016, the brand’s 50th anniversary. There were rumors, which the executives refuse to confirm, that the special Cohiba cigar released at the Festival would be a 60 ring gauge, or some kind of thicker ring gauge cigar.

“We have been following the trends of consumers with thicker cigars. We will never abandon thinner ring gauge cigars, but we have to follow the trends in the market. So, there may be some surprises in the bigger ring gauges,” says Sánchez Harguindey.

In addition to Cohiba, the two other brands to be highlighted at the Festival are a Cuaba 20th Anniversary cigar, and the Hoyo de Monterrey Reserva Cosecha 2012, which will be the same size as an Epicure No. 2.

Sánchez Harguindey emphasizes that there will be no big changes in Habanos’ special programs: Edición Limitadas, Regional Editions, Reservas, Gran Reservas and Añejados. “We have these five programs that are working very well,” he says, “and we want to keep building on them.”

Habanos intends to release new Añejados, or aged cigars, in 2016. They will join the Montecristo Churchill Añejados (91 points), and the Romeo y Julieta Pirámide Añejados (92 points). Sánchez Harguindey declined to reveal brand names for the new Añejados.

“Just like the situation with the Ediciones Limitadas, we do not want to saturate the market with these special cigars, but given the value they have brought to us, it is clear that next year we are going to have some surprises in this category,” he says.

Habanos releases nearly 40 new cigars annually, the bulk of them Regional Editions, which are cigars that are made for a specific Habanos market. Some examples are the Edmundo Dantes Conde 109 for Mexico, or the Diplomaticos Excelencia, a robusto size for Cuba in 2015.

“We always try to meet the needs and requests of our distributors, but in a rational way,” says Sánchez Harguindey. “We want to maintain a balance between the Ediciones Regionales and our other products.”

When asked how many boxes of these special editions were planned, the copresidents say it varies according to the market, or the special cigar. “It can be 20,000 or 100,000 depending on the market, and the type of cigar,” says Sánchez Harguindey. He says that especially applies to cigars like the Añejado series, where they do not release production figures. “They are limited-production cigars. That’s all we will say,” says Sánchez Harguindey.

He also reaffirms that the market will receive new packaging designs like the Selección de Petit Robustos 2015, which went on sale last summer. There have already been special selections of Robustos and Pirámides, and Sánchez Harguindey expects there will be others.



Two special Cubans that should be on sale soon: the Romeo y Julieta Wide Churchill Gran Reserva (left) and the Montecristo 80th Aniversario.

Sánchez Harguindey believes part of the special selection strategy is to highlight the specific taste of a brand. “A mark should have its own taste,” he says. “Like in the United States, where brands highlight their origins, we want to highlight the brand character.”

Núñez Blanco says that Cuba’s continuing efforts against counterfeit cigars have made inroads. “We have fewer problems today,” he says. “Can’t say we don’t have *some* problems, but there are less.”

“With any luxury product, it is impossible to eradicate fakes,” adds Sánchez Harguindey. “People will always try to imitate you. We keep trying new methods, but with our new bands, the holographs and the other security measures, they have helped. We have been working with a track-and-trace software that allows people to go online to check codes so they can be sure they are buying legitimate products. We are using all methods to try to minimize the problem.”

The copresidents say that all their efforts—new products, anti-counterfeit measures, new social media efforts—are designed to bring Cuban cigars closer to the consumer with a great degree of confidence.

“With the markets we have, and the strategies we are implementing at the local level in places from Asia to Europe, and all the emerging countries, as well as in our emerging markets,” says Sánchez Harguindey, “we are very enthusiastic about the future.” ♦

moments to remember

Please send all submissions to: CIGAR AFICIONADO/Moments to Remember, Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10019. Or email them to: momentstoremember@mshanken.com. To order additional copies of CIGAR AFICIONADO, call 1-800-344-0763.



From left, Ernie Els, Marvin R. Shanken, Phil Mintz and Larry Schwartz at Old Palm Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.



From left, Michael Frey, Cynthia Fuente-Suarez, Meera Levin, Liana Fuente and Robert Levin light up a smoke to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Casa Fuente in Las Vegas, Nevada.



At the wedding of Kelly Gatta and Brett Bakker, in Beacon, New York, father-of-the-bride Carmen Gatta lights his son Brendan's Arturo Fuente cigar.



Man's two best friends: his dog and his cigar. Dr. Brian W. Crawford kicks back with a Punch cigar and his dog Maddie in Stockton, California.



Here's to smoking in style. From left, Stephen Birkett, Casey Skarecki, CIGAR AFICIONADO's Barry Abrams and his son Brett Abrams, get ready for a cigar smoking ride in a 1949 Chevrolet, in Havana, Cuba.



Chris Morris, master distiller at Woodford Reserve, presents an engraved and autographed bottle with cigars to Jack Kelly at a Bourbon pairing seminar held at the Brown-Forman corporate offices in Louisville, Kentucky.



Groom Daniel Bustamante and his bride Dolores ring in their wedding day with best friends Rich, Pete and Paul and, of course, fine cigars, in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Paul Hubbard, along with family and friends, celebrates his daughter Hillary's wedding to Greg Henninger by lighting up premium cigars in La Jolla, California.



Old friends Floyd Husk, Bobby Buffkin, Gerry Farr and Jack Totten hit the links with their favorite cigars in hand, at Bartram Trail Golf Club, in Evans, Georgia.

Master Piece *In a* Bottle



Discover This Authentic Rum Treasure.

www.zafrarum.com





Back home in San Diego, California, friends Bob Gaddi and Mort Levinson admire their haul of cigars from Big Smoke Las Vegas.



Dianna Rae High, center, hosts a Men's Night at her jewelry store in Lafayette, Louisiana, complete with a Scotch tasting and private-label cigars for each of her guests.



A fine cigar selection for a special evening: At the wedding of Michael and Tiffany Manhas, the groom, fourth from left, celebrates with his buddies Kamal, Jeevan, Tej, Lorenzo, Steve, Dave and Bryce, while smoking Cohiba Behike 54 at Parker Palm Springs, in Palm Springs, California.

Entubado **Construction**

4 Dominican **Puros**

Silky Oily **Wrapper**

Characteristics that makes **PDR CIGARS** special, 10 years **strong** ...



WWW.PDRCIGARS.COM

BOUTIQUE FACTORY AND LOVING IT!





On their 11th annual football trip, Dave Vennard and his group of old pals celebrate more than 30 years of friendship by smoking cigars at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois.



Mike Orth, center, shares a cigar with his son John and John's classmate Kate Willis, in honor of their graduation as physician assistants, in Sherwood, Oregon.



Groom Joseph Costello shares a cigar with friends and family during his wedding celebration at the Ashford Estate in Allentown, New Jersey.



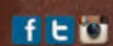
by
Felix A. Mesa



*From the blessed soil of Cuba's central region,
to the rich fields of Esteli, our blends pay tribute
to my family's long history in tobacco.*

Miami - Florida
Headquarter - Cigar Lounge
El Galan Cigars
9523 SW 40th St, Miami, FL 33165
aromadevueltaabajo@yahoo.com
(305) 221-3303
www.elgalancigars.com

Esteli - Nicaragua
The Factory
El Galan Cigars S.A.
De la Gasolinera ESSO, una cuadra al Este.
Barrio de Jose Santos Zelaya.
505.2713.5255 305.906.4827





A LEGEND AMONG LANDMARKS

A standard for cigar aficionados for 19 years, Shelly's Back Room is a comfortable, yet still elegant, retreat in which to enjoy fine cigars and choose from a distinguished assortment of single malt and blended whiskies. Lunch, dinner and late-night menus offer the perfect complement to your cigar smoking pleasure.

A new, state-of-the-art continuous fresh air system has recently been installed to make your visit to Washington's best cigar tavern even better!

Shelly's Back Room

1331 F. Street NW • Washington, D.C.
202.737.3003 • SHELLYSBACKROOM.COM



Pastor Buddy poses with Jeff and Shelly Clark as they celebrate their nuptials with Gran Habano Gran Reserva #5 2010 in Holden Beach, North Carolina.



Brothers Jody and John Gumpel enjoy the excellent weather in Baiting Hollow, Long Island, New York, with cold beer and a selection of fine cigars.



Bryan Wilkinson, Lloyd Davenport and Tom Haynes relax with smokes at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Punta Cana, the Dominican Republic.



With drinks and great cigars in hand, Adam Lach, center, in Panama hat, lights up with his buddies to commemorate his wedding day in Carbondale, Illinois.



Dan Jordan and Steve Hall, best friends since second grade, indulge in fine cigars at a tailgate at West Point, New York, during the Class of 1989's 25th reunion.



In Budapest, Hungary, Miklós Kékedi, Zalán Szittnyai and Gábor Szalay host an American-style Thanksgiving dinner and celebrate afterward with a fine selection of cigars.

FREYJA

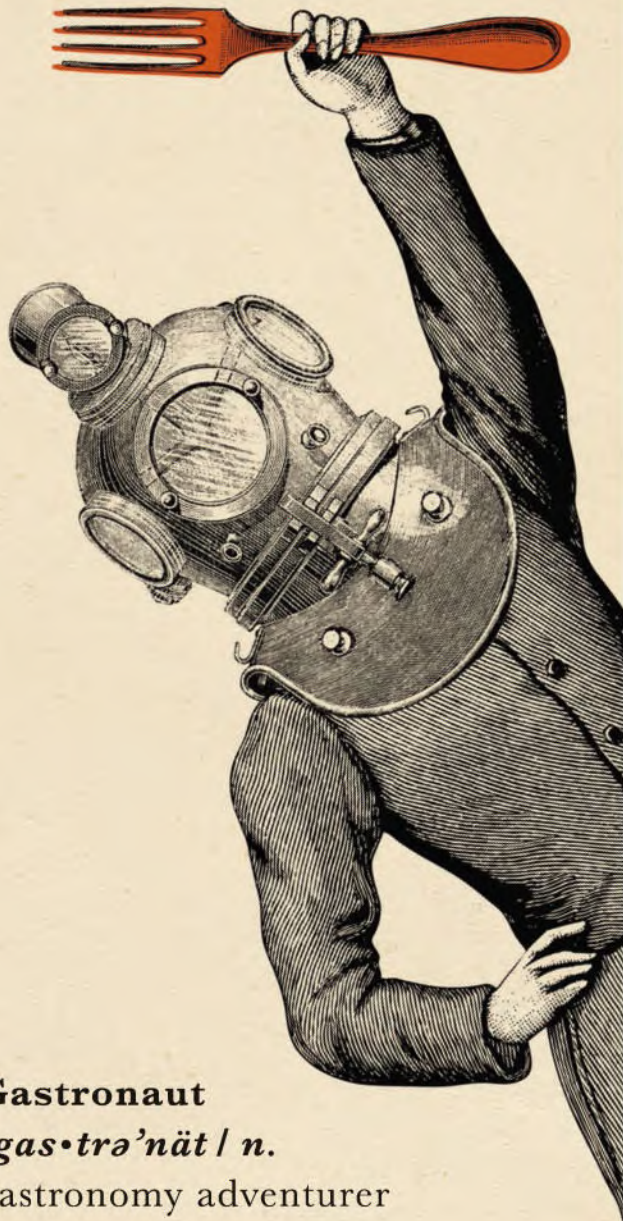
CIGARS

Bold and Worthy of Her Goddess Name

By Emma Viktorsson

Las Cumbres Tabaco

TICKETS ON
SALE
NOW



Gastronaut
/gas•trə'nät / n.
gastronomy adventurer
See figure 1.

CHARLESTON®
WINE + FOOD

MARCH 02-06 2016 | #CHSWFF

CHARLESTONWINEANDFOOD.COM



With the sun, the ocean and some great reading material, good friends Mark Schneider, Michelle Wolter and Bill Fabian light up cigars while sailing off the coast of Greece.



Florida natives Alan Berger and Scott Pustizzi smoke pregame cigars at the Miami Dolphins v. Chicago Bears tailgate party in Chicago, Illinois.



James and Melanie Adams, Rechienda and David Jernigan, Bob Adams, and Karen and Lother Henderson enjoy cigars at a wedding in Providence, Rhode Island.



Donald McKenzie and daughter-in-law Fiona McKenzie enjoy a few Gurkha 125th Anniversary cigars at the Ironwood Grill in Pinehurst, North Carolina.



Tommy Maze, Franki Joyner, Stephen Goodwin and David Griffin indulge in Montecristos at the Currituck Club in Corolla, North Carolina.



Liam Fay, center, savors a cigar with friends and family Charlie, Corey, T.J., Joe, Mike, Bart, Kyle, Tom, Sean and Wade at his wedding in Slate Hill, New York.



Jim Woodhull and his son Darrin Woodhull enjoy excellent cigars before teeing off at the Red Hawk Ridge Golf Club in Castle Rock, Colorado.



In Tampa, Florida, for the wedding of Liana Fuente and Manny Garcia: Rocky Patel, David Savona, Robert Levin, Wayne Suarez, Jorge Padrón, father-of-the-bride Carlos Fuente Jr., Erik Calvino, Michael Frey and Orlando Padrón.



Marine Corps Private First Class Jonah Chalk, second from left, with his uncle, dad and brother, celebrate his graduation from boot camp by lighting up some Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series cigars in San Diego, California.

CIGAR AFICIONADO (ISSN #1063-7885) is published bimonthly by M. Shanken Communications, Inc., Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019. (212) 684-4224. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Address changes and subscription inquiries: CIGAR AFICIONADO, P.O. Box 37367 Boone, IA 50037-0367; call 1-800-365-4929; or email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com. Subscription rates: United States, \$19.95 per year; Canada, \$38.00 per year; all other foreign, \$56.00. Subscriptions are payable in U.S. funds. TO ORDER A NEW SUBSCRIPTION, call 1-800-992-2442, email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, or write to aforementioned Boone address. To order back issues, call 1-800-761-4099. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned, and no responsibility can be assumed for such material. All "Letters to the Editor" should be sent to the editor at the aforementioned New York address. All rights in letters sent to CIGAR AFICIONADO will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and subject to CIGAR AFICIONADO's unrestricted right to edit. CIGAR AFICIONADO® is a registered trademark of M. Shanken Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted or reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the publisher. Copyright © 2015, M. Shanken Communications, Inc. To sell CIGAR AFICIONADO call: 1-800-344-0763.

made for you



In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The “Made for You” section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

1 TANKS FOR THE RIDE—GURKHA RPV CIVILIAN EDITION

You might find yourself getting a wider berth when you drop the kids off at school in the Civilian Edition of the Gurkha Rapid Patrol Vehicle from Terradyne Armored Vehicles Inc. The company specializes in tactical vehicles for police and military, but now the casual armored-car enthusiast can order one—minus the artillery. The 13,000-pound Civilian Edition is built on the chassis of a Ford F-450, and equipped with a 6.7-liter, V8 turbo diesel engine and six-speed automatic transmission. terradyneinc.com

2 SPECTACULAR SHIRTING—ALBINI GROUP

The full bespoke-shirt treatment is more than just a great fit. It starts with fantastic fabrics. That's why the Italy-based Albini Group has sourced the finest Egyptian cotton in the world, including once-endangered varieties like Giza 45—the “queen of all Egyptian cottons.” These precious, extra-long staple cottons become truly transcendent once they're loomed into fabric and then tailor-made to your torso. Made in Italy, Albini's fabrics are used by English heritage brands Thomas Mason and David & John Anderson, as well as Cotonificio Albini. albinigroup.com

3 A GLASS FOR BUBBLY—RIEDEL

It may seem hard to believe that Riedel, the fine glassmaker that invented vessels designed to best enjoy the most specific of wine varieties, never fashioned a Champagne-specific glass. Well, that anomaly is no longer true. Just in time for the New Year, the company, with its 11 generations of experience, introduces the Veritas Champagne Wine Glass (\$69/set of two). Interestingly, it avoids the narrow flute shape, so popular of late, on the premise that a wider mouth opens up the drinker's experience. riedel.com

4 STRUMMING YOUR CIGAR (BOX)—SNOWDEN GUITARS

For Mike Snowden, guitars and cigars seem to go together—and not just because they rhyme. The Marietta, Georgia, musician has been finding ways to take the boxes the latter come in and make impressively crafted versions of the former. This is no mere hobby (he's built more than a thousand to date). Nor is it a novelty for show (a bass player by profession who's shared the stage with the likes of Joe Cocker, Snowden makes serious music come out of his instruments). A by-product are his themed compositions, like “The Cigar Box Stomp.” snowdenguitars.com

5 007 DOSSIER—THE JAMES BOND ARCHIVES

So you read the books, saw the movies and think you know everything about the world's most-celebrated spy. You don't—unless you've read *The James Bond Archives*. The art-book publisher Taschen has put together a file of Bond movie intelligence that the KGB would have coveted. It covers every film from *Dr. No* to *Spectre*, replete with story boards, shooting schedules and a wealth of behind-the-scenes dish. Bonus: an interview with Ian Fleming. taschen.com

6 PUNCHING FROM THE CUFF—COOL MATERIAL

If you're of a minimalist mindset that says everything should be utilitarian and life has no room for the purely ornamental—well, we sympathize—but there's still an argument for you to wear one of the few items of jewelry deemed worthy of male adornment. The Cigar Punch Cufflinks, from Cool Material, are just that: cuff links that double as cigar punches. Just unscrew the barrel top from the link and cut a circle in your cigar's head. Now you have an excuse to dress up. shop.coolmaterial.com



RÉMY MARTIN[®]
ONE LIFE / LIVE THEM

FINE CHAMPAGNE / FRENCH OAK / COGNAC CRAFTED



Villeret Collection

JB
1735
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE

BLANCPAIN BOUTIQUES
645 FIFTH AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022 · TEL 212 396 1735
LAS VEGAS · THE FORUM SHOPS AT CAESARS · TEL 702 369 1735
www.blancpain.com